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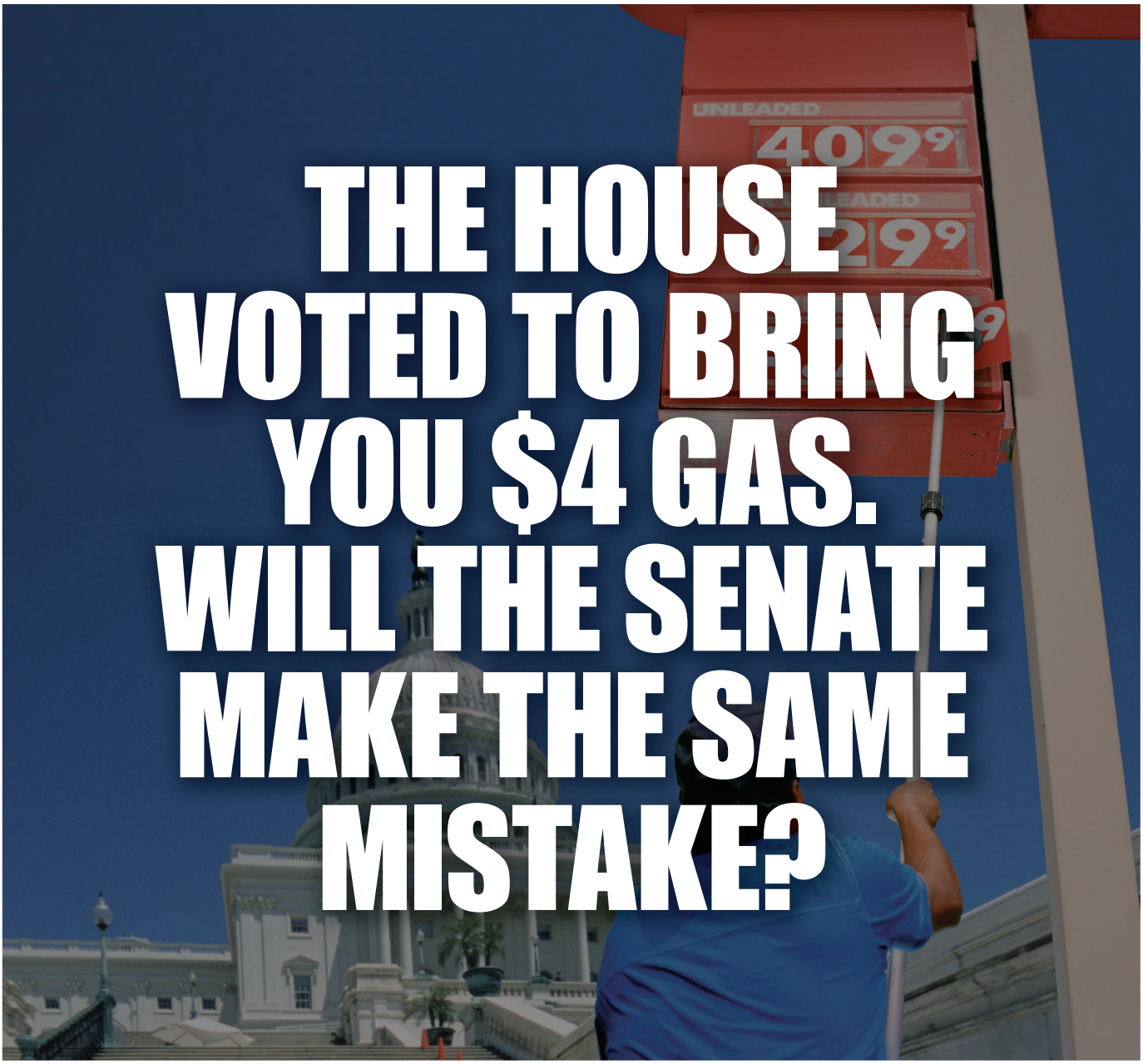

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Letters

Policy Paternity

Michael Cannon's piece on the Massachusetts health program ("Romney's Folly," August 10) creates the impression that Gov. Mitt Romney and the Heritage Foundation wanted to impose a coverage mandate on employers. Not true.

Governor Romney, like Heritage, steadfastly opposed the employer mandate. He vetoed it, and the Democrats in the state legislature overrode it.

As for the individual mandate enacted into law, that wasn't Romney's idea, or Heritage's. To cope with an estimated $1.3 billion in uncompensated care costs shifted onto taxpayers, Romney originally proposed giving Massachusetts citizens a choice: Either buy health insurance or post a bond to cover expenses associated with emergency-room care. If that is a mandate, then it is a mandate to pay one's bills. There is nothing conservative or "libertarian" about making persons responsible for the consequences of their decision not to buy health insurance. Heritage felt the governor's formulation of a personal choice—"insurance or bond, you decide"—was a practical and acceptable way to solve the problem of a "mandate" on taxpayers, in the form of free-rider costs and the expense of uncompensated care.

Cannon may disagree with that approach to solving a tough practical problem, or with the governor's decision to sign the bill, but he also has a duty to stick to the facts. The facts are available in Heritage's analysis of the law at the time of enactment ("The Massachusetts Health Plan: Lessons for the States").

Robert E. Moffit
Director, Center for Health Policy Studies
The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

MICHAEL CANNON REPLIES: The legislature rejected Romney's preferred individual mandate and rolled him on the employer mandate. Beyond that, my friend Robert's account employs a fair amount of spin.

An individual mandate with a bond option is still an individual mandate, and gives government all the powers my article decries. And regardless, Romney signed the no-option individual mandate. No denying paternity there; it's Mitt's baby.

If Romney had truly opposed the employer mandate, he could have declared it a deal-breaker from Day One, or vetoed the whole package. All it would have cost him was $385 million of scammed Medicaid money that never belonged to Massachusetts in the first place. It's what any good conservative would have done.

Romney's unsuccessful line-item veto of the employer mandate, on the heels of signing the more dangerous individual mandate, was the sort of cynical stunt that big-government Republicans use to appear conservative—like supporting a massive tax increase but opposing withholding.

The conservative answer to uncompensated care is not to curtail the freedom of non-free-riders. It is to collect from would-be free riders as much as possible, and then write off the balance as the price of living in a decent society.

Correction

"Romney's Folly" stated that Romney's health-care plan cost $2 trillion. The correct figure is $2 billion.

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The Week

■ First the president called him stupid, then he had to have a beer with Joe Biden. Hasn't Officer Crowley been punished enough?

■ "I have immortal longings in me," said Cleopatra as she clasped the asp. Barack Obama got to go to Olympus much more cheaply, as his cool, America's racial fevers, and a haggard media establishment desperate for life support boosted him to a kind of divinity. But spring and summer polls show him returning to earth. *Washington Post*/ABC finds approval of his handling of health care at 49 percent, down from 57 percent in April. NBC/*Wall Street Journal* shows approval of his handling of the economy also at 49 percent, down from 56 percent in February. *USA Today*/Gallup finds more disapproval than approval of his handling of both issues (49/47 for the economy, 50/44 for health care). Obama's personal popularity remains solid, and Republicans have not made up significant ground. But the trillions being thrown around, first to stimulate the economy, then to remake one-sixth of it, seem alarming. Because they are. In the wake of this alarm, Barack Obama rejoins the ranks of ordinary mortals.

■ *Newsweek* ran a cover story arguing that the recession is probably over, leading President Obama to warn against serving champagne. They are both right. The recession has probably been over for months. New unemployment claims have been dropping for many weeks now, which is usually a sign of recovery. The manufacturing index is up, as are home sales and the stock market. The most intense period of inventory contraction seems to be behind us. The economic pain will not be ending for some time. Unemployment is a lagging indicator—more and more of one following recent downturns. Once it drops, all that will be left is for Obama to take the credit.

■ The Democrats have raised the cigarette tax. They have said that they will allow tax rates on dividends, capital gains, and high earners to rise next year. They have tried to impose hidden energy taxes through their cap-and-trade legislation. Their health-care bills raise taxes on hiring—which is to say, they indirectly raise taxes on employees. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner was recently asked on ABC whether the administration had any additional plans to raise taxes in order to close the deficit. In response he said nothing about spending cuts, and he declined to affirm (when invited to do so) Obama's campaign pledge that people who make under $250,000 will not pay higher taxes. (White House press secretary Robert Gibbs says Obama is committed to the pledge.) Geithner added, "I think what the country needs to do is understand we're going to have to do what it takes, we're going to do what's necessary." We understand, all right.

■ "Cash for Clunkers," the federal government's $4,500 car trade-in subsidy—which already has cost taxpayers a billion

ROMAN GENN

dollars—is dumb on both environmental and economic grounds. Environmental: It subsidizes the switch from relatively fuel-inefficient cars to relatively fuel-efficient ones, but doesn't take into account the energy consumed in manufacturing new cars or the environmental impact of disposing of the old ones. Building a new Toyota Prius, for example, uses the equivalent of burning about 1,000 gallons of gasoline, meaning that, in many cases, the "greener" thing would be buying a good used car—which Cash for Clunkers will not subsidize, no matter how fuel-efficient it is. Economic: It is obviously impossible to build wealth by wantonly destroying assets, even if the asset is a 1994 Chevy Blazer with 140,000 miles on the ticker. The Democratic Congress seems set to expand the program, which is as good a symbol as any of Obamanomics.

■ By now all America knows of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s arrest, for disorderly conduct, by Sgt. James Crowley, and Barack Obama's comment that the Cambridge police had acted "stupidly." Perhaps even Uighurs and Darfurians know of it. The racial tensions, and the anxiety to resolve them, that helped to propel one of these men to the White House finally brought all three of them there for a beer summit. Hyped and pummeled though the event now is, it still has points of interest. Gates's angry sense of entitlement

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marked a member of the overclass and not just a racial grievance monger (among whom Gates is a comparative moderate). Should outbreaks of temper be grounds for arrest? The police work for us, not vice versa. And while it is true that there are reasons black men are more likely to be scrutinized (they commit more crimes), it is nonetheless an affront to the innocent to pay for the sins of the guilty. Still, calm and courtesy is the best policy; and most of our endless national conversation on race does nothing to instill those virtues. The three principals got a beer out of it. America, rather less.

■ Much foolishness has become attached to the question of President Obama's place of birth, and a few misguided souls on the right have indulged it (to the delight of the press and the White House). The president's birth certificate has been made available to reporters for inspection, and its authenticity has been repeatedly confirmed by the authorities in Hawaii, where he was born. Conservatives ought to leave conspiracy theorizing to the likes of Rosie O'Donnell and the one in three Democrats who believe that 9/11 was an inside job. Obama is a wrongheaded president, but not an illegitimate one.

■ A solution in search of a problem: To fulfill the president's reckless promise to close Gitmo, the administration now toys with creating a new one inside the U.S.—probably in Michigan. That state's heavily Democratic congressional delegation will offer less resistance than earlier brainstorms—e.g., sprinkling the 230-odd trained jihadists throughout the country—had to face. Because Michigan is an economic basket case, it can be bought off: billions in spending to build a suitable facility, pitched as a job saver for hundreds of corrections officers. But the proposal is ill considered. Gitmo is a perfectly good facility.

Start Spreading the TED

WHILE the economic data have continued to be chilly, financial markets have been positively buoyant. The S&P 500, for example, has advanced about 50 percent since its trough in March. The stock market clearly believes that the storm has passed. But stock markets go up and down, often for little obvious reason. There is only one way to know whether the storm has truly passed: It's time to check back in with "TED."

Last October, a chart in this space showed the difference between the rate that the world's most prominent banks pay one another in order to borrow money for three months and the three-month U.S. Treasury rate. The first rate is called the LIBOR, or the London Interbank Offered Rate. Their difference is known in the industry as the "TED spread."

If Deutsche Bank borrows money from J. P. Morgan for three months and pays it 4 percent interest, and the U.S. three-month Treasury rate is 3 percent, then the spread on the chart would be 1 percent. Over history, this spread has been about half a percentage point. Last fall it climbed to almost 5 percent. The bluest-chip banks were singing the blues. Interest rates were high because the odds of default were perceived to be high as well. Panic swept faster than swine flu from investor to investor and risk-taking stopped, as did the world economy.

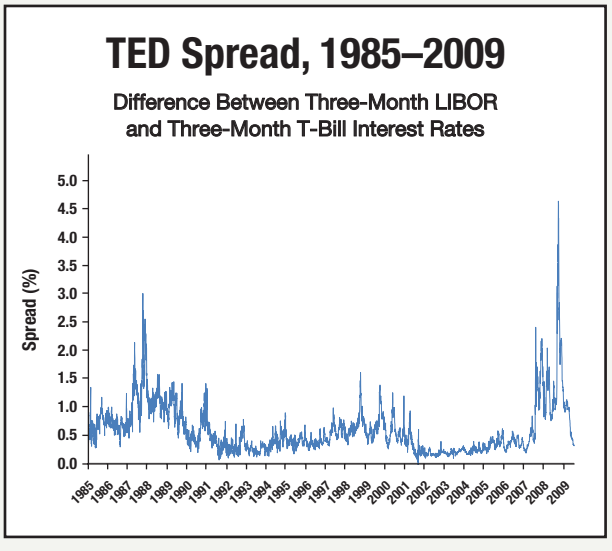
I wrote last fall that surely those defaults could not possibly happen, both because safety nets the world over would catch the plummeting banks and because panics inevitably overstate the likelihood of catastrophe. Indeed, as can be seen in the chart below, the TED spread has returned approximately to its historic norm. Banks have stepped back from the abyss, and no longer treat one another like junk borrowers.

Since financial panic set off the economic calamity, this clear sign that the panic has subsided is a precondition of a lasting recovery. It is necessary but not sufficient. In particular, banks have not defaulted in part because governments and central banks stepped in. Yet governments themselves have rung up enormous debts, both to finance the bank bailouts and to "stimulate" the economy.

Whether the recovery endures will surely depend on the fiscal situation. If government finances return to sound footing, then the government backstop will continue to serve its calming function and the economy will eventually boom again. But if deficits expand, as they will if Obamacare becomes law, then the market may well begin to wonder whether governments have enough resources left to sustain the safety net in the event of another panic. At that point, the panic will recur, and TED will again take center stage.

The TED spread is so low that markets must think that governments will work things out. For those opposed to the current president's agenda, that might be the best news yet.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



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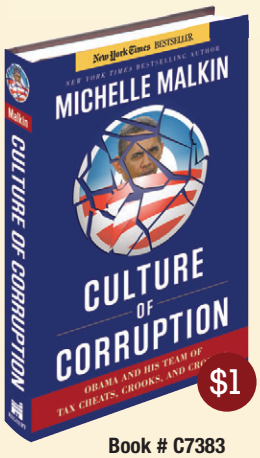

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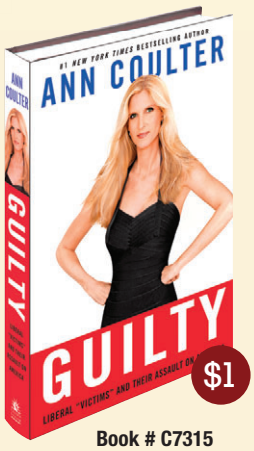

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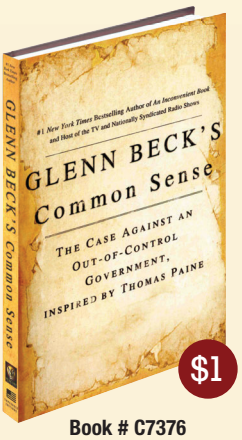

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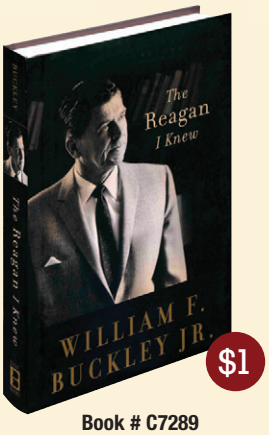

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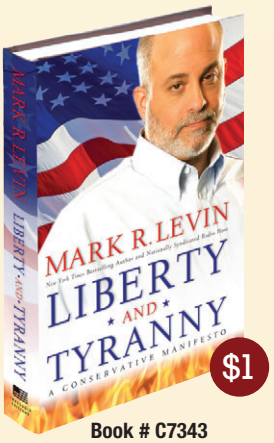

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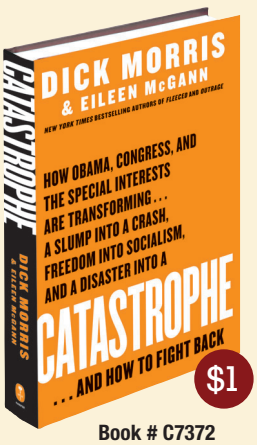
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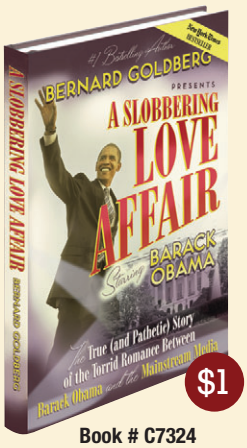

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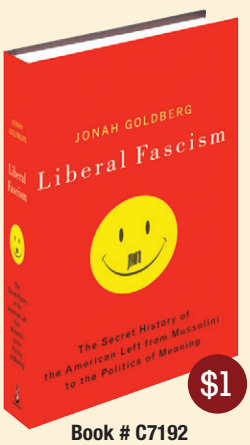

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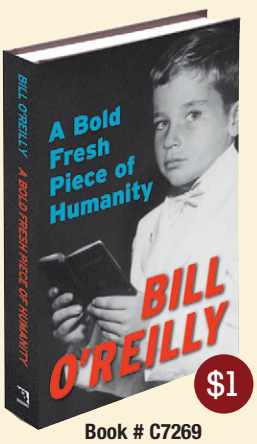

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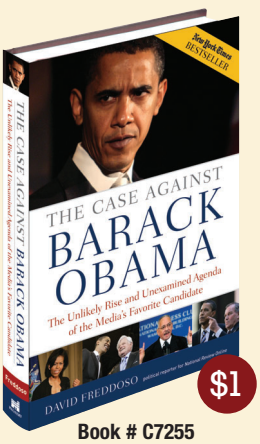
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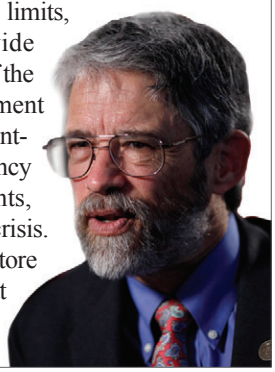
Even Eurocrats have piped down about it (rather than share the security burden). The alternatives are not as good. Trained terrorists who plot to escape and kill their military jailers are beyond the capabilities of regular corrections officers. Residential areas will have to be protected against plots by other jihadists to free their imprisoned confederates. And federal judges will be able to accord these jihadists the full panoply of constitutional rights—and to order their release.

■ Sens. Chris Dodd and Kent Conrad, Democrats both, are recipients of sweetheart deals from disgraced mortgage lender Countrywide, having secured discounted loans under the firm's infamous program for "Friends of Angelo"—that's Angelo Mozilo, the former CEO. Alphonso Jackson of the Bush cabinet and Donna Shalala of the Clinton cabinet were Friends of Angelo, too. Dodd and Conrad avow that they had no idea they were receiving special treatment because they were senators. Robert Feinberg, who managed Countrywide's VIP program, says otherwise. Dodd has a history of dodgy real-estate deals. He purchased a Washington condo with the aid of Edward Downe Jr., a financier later convicted in a massive insider-trading and fraud scheme (and pardoned by Bill Clinton, thanks to the intercession of Chris Dodd); then he purchased a seaside estate in Ireland with one of the same fraudster's business partners. Senator Dodd is chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, with a portfolio that includes financial reform. Senator Conrad chairs the Budget Committee. Each claims not to know a good deal when he sees it—and signs his name to it.

■ It sounds like a far-fetched Ayn Rand story line (is there any other kind?): Andrew J. Hall, the head of Phibro, a small commodities-trading firm based in Connecticut, is being set up as a candidate for public crucifixion. That is because Hall has done a particularly good job this year for one client—Citigroup. He is an oil trader, and, under the terms of his contract with the struggling financial giant, he is entitled to a percentage of the profit he produced for the bank this year—and that number comes out to about $100 million. Citigroup, recall, was bailed out with $45 billion in taxpayers' money, and the Washington "pay czar"—dreadful phrase to read, isn't it?—has been snooping around and may try to block the payout. Yes, $100 million is a lot of money, and financial-industry compensation can be mind-boggling to those of us in less rarefied tax brackets. But consider this: Hall has made Citigroup about $2 billion in the past five years, so his big payday is equal to about 5 percent of what he's produced. If every Citigroup operation performed as well as Hall's, there'd have been no bailout. Hall and Phibro, the *New York Times* reports, are so disgusted by bailout politics that they are looking to end their relationship with Citigroup. And there you have Bailout Nation in a nutshell: The failed and failing are propped up while the profitable are forced from the field. Surely this, and not a sudden decline in literary taste, explains the surging sales of *Atlas Shrugged*.

■ President Obama may be silver-tongued, but he botched his recent press conference, broadcast on television in prime time. He repeatedly stepped in it, insulting doctors, policemen, and probably others, too. If he and his team could efface this press conference from the record, they would. But what did Tom Shales, the *Washington Post*'s television critic, think of it? "About the most justifiable criticism that could likely be made: 'Barack Obama still seems too good to be true.'" No doubt he thinks the same thing about his journalism.

■ John Holdren, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, has the résumé, well-credentialed and slightly boring, of a lifelong academic and science bureaucrat. In 1977, however, he walked on the wild side, co-authoring *Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment*, a course book, with Paul and Anne Ehrlich. The Ehrlichs were population-explosion scaremongers; the book they and Holdren wrote discussed the issues involved in this supposed problem. The solutions they considered make interesting reading: mandatory family limits, compulsory sterilization, a worldwide "Planetary Regime" to coordinate all of the above, along with resource development and consumption. These ideas are presented in a foam of hypothesis, but the urgency is plain, and on Planet Holdren, rights, ethics, and religion give way to the crisis. When Barack Obama promised to "restore science to its rightful place," is this what he had in mind?



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

■ You can tell a lot about a president by the Medals of Freedom he awards. President Obama, in his first round, is giving one to Mary Robinson, the erstwhile U.N. official. Indeed, she was the perfect U.N. official: a tribune of the Third Worldists and Israel-haters. It was she who presided over the 2001 Durban conference, that hate-filled, anti-Semitic jamboree. The late Democratic congressman Tom Lantos (a Holocaust survivor) said that "much of the responsibility for the debacle" rested with her. Some Jewish groups have expressed disappointment over Obama's decision to honor her. In response, she has said, "There's a lot of bullying by certain elements of the Jewish community. They bully people who try to address the severe situation in Gaza and the West Bank." Yes, she is the perfect U.N. official—and the perfect recipient of an Obama Medal of Freedom.

■ Kay Bailey Hutchison has decided to leave the Senate and challenge her fellow Republican, Rick Perry, in his bid for reelection as governor of Texas. Both are conservative, Perry a little more so. The state's economy is doing well, remarkably well given the national climate. Texas is not running a deficit. So what's the case for unseating Perry? Hutchison's attacks on him have an ad hoc feel. "Yet another Rick Perry disaster" was her description of the governor's decision to turn down $55 million out of $14 billion in federal stimulus funds for the state. Her position is wrong and her passion is fake. In Washington she has been an effective senator and supported worthwhile policies. It would be a shame if she ended her career with a vanity project.

■ Typically, when politicians want to keep an event on the down-low, they time it so that news breaks at close of business on a Friday. Once in a while, though, a little more secrecy is in

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order. This, apparently, was the case with the California state assembly's vote on a plan to allow more offshore drilling near Santa Barbara: After the plan was defeated, the assembly voted to expunge the vote. (There's no word on whether they also intend to vote to expunge the vote that expunged the vote.) Somehow, this Orwellian tactic was not immediately controversial; the assembly approved it with a voice vote, and not a single assemblyman objected. But the expunging of a public record—a major blow to government transparency—is not merely inept, it is corrupt, and those who enabled it deserve a sharp rebuke from the voters.

■ It was as stark a case of voter intimidation as you will probably ever see. And, thanks to modern technology, you can see it on YouTube. On Election Day in Philadelphia, members of the New Black Panther party stood outside the polls wearing paramilitary gear and wielding nightsticks. They issued threats and insults. One Panther told a voter, "Cracker, you about to be ruled by a black man." Republican poll watchers, a husband and wife, were called "race traitors." (They were black.) The Justice Department won a default judgment against the Panthers in federal court—not very difficult, given the circumstances. But a funny thing happened when the DOJ went to seek sanctions: Its new political appointees, overruling the career lawyers, dropped the case. This decision has left Republicans, and maybe some others, confused and alarmed. Congressman Frank Wolf said, "There are many questions that need to be answered. This whole thing just stinks to high heaven." Not to worry, though: One of the Panthers is getting his just deserts. As the *Washington Times* reported, an injunction prevents Mr. Samir Shabazz from brandishing a weapon outside a polling place through Nov. 15, 2012. Justice spokesman Tracy Schmaler said that the department "will fully enforce the terms of that injunction."

■ The Fire Department of New York lost 343 firefighters in the collapse of the World Trade Center following the 9/11 attacks. You know that these firefighters were heroes. Did you also know that they were the beneficiaries of "intentional race discrimination"? That was the complaint lodged against the FDNY by the U.S. Justice Department under the last administration. New York City was 25 percent black, 27 percent Hispanic at the time; corresponding percentages for firefighters were 3.4 and 6.7. The discrepancy arose because black and Hispanic applicants to the city's Fire Academy passed the entrance examinations at a much lower rate than other groups. What could this be but intentional discrimination—examination questions subtly slanted to fox nonwhite examinees? District-court judge Nicholas Garaufis has now given summary judgment for the plaintiffs. In a 93-page ruling he declared that the entry-level examination was "not fair" and "not adequately related to the job for which it tests." Nowhere in those 93 pages did the judge show an instance of a question that was unfair to minority test-takers or unrelated to firefighting skills. Nor did he suggest a selection procedure more objective than written testing. How could he? There is none.

■ The City of Los Angeles is asking Washington for $30 million to finance a ten-year run of the Cirque du Soleil, prompting economist Donald Boudreaux of George Mason University to lament: "So it's finally come to pass—America has embarked on the same road down which ancient Rome marched to its ruin: Uncle Sam not only subsidizes bread (by subsidizing wheat production) but now also circuses." Clowns.

■ Tehran 2009 is a replay of Stalin's Moscow. The show trial has once again come into its own, demonizing selected victims and terrorizing the public. By this means the "Supreme Leader," Ali Khamenei, and his mouthpiece, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, are establishing their power just as Stalin once did. About 100 defendants have been brought into court, most of them shackled, all dressed in prison gray uniforms, and with plastic shoes and no socks. Clerics are deprived of their turbans. The accused have been carefully selected as men who once held important posts, so that examples may be made of them, under threat of the death penalty. In pure totalitarian style, defendants plead guilty to harming the Supreme Leader and the revolution, and to being agents of foreign powers. Outside the court, paramilitary forces are making sure to be in control. So confident was Stalin of public opinion that he allowed foreign correspondents to cover his show trials, but Khamenei allows only official media. Dissidents speak of hundreds, even thousands, in jail awaiting summary justice, and torture and execution appear commonplace. Nobody can verify the names or numbers of the victims, but the son of an aide to one of the losing presidential candidates, it is reliably confirmed, has been beaten to death in prison. Repression is stoking the rage of the population.

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■ *Slate*'s Jacob Weisberg has figured out what's wrong with Barack Obama's Iran policy—George W. Bush. "Surely if not for Bush, Obama's instinct after the Iranian election would have been to identify with those risking their lives to free their country, not to get back to his attempt at dialogue with Ahmadinejad." But surely Obama's instincts as a left-liberal are to defer to despots, so long as they are of color and anti-Western. Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, now or soon, makes the left-liberal even more temporizing. Meanwhile, think of the years of power and influence that stretch before George W. Bush. FDR, who was president for only three terms and change, has nothing on him. W. will be shaping policy as long as the Weisbergs of our time walk the earth.

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■ During Bush's time in office, the U.S. Interests Section in Havana was a very interesting place. We erected a mockup of political prisoner Oscar Biscet's cell—to dramatize his plight, and that of his fellows. We had Lech Walesa speak to dissidents by video hookup. And so on. We were engaged with the population, not merely the dictatorship. We also had—another of our gestures or gambits—a news ticker. This flashed information to Cuban passersby: information that the dictatorship was not keen for them to see. In Cuba, there is only one news source: the dictatorship. Well, the Obama administration has now turned the ticker off. Cuba turns out to be the one place where liberals aren't for a Fairness Doctrine.

■ Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez was already upset that Washington and Bogotá are negotiating a military pact that would enlarge the U.S. presence in Colombia. Then, on July 27, Colombian vice president Francisco Santos announced that Colombian troops had recovered Venezuelan anti-tank rocket launchers (originally made in Sweden) from the FARC, the leftist narcoterrorists who have waged a guerrilla war in Colombia for decades. Chávez responded by freezing diplomatic relations with Bogotá. His government continues to deny that it has aided the FARC, but those denials are now risible. A new U.S. Government Accountability Office report confirms that American officials believe Venezuela has provided the FARC with "safe haven" and "material support." In a May 2008 speech, Barack Obama pledged that his administration would "shine a light on any support for the FARC that comes from neighboring governments. This behavior must be exposed to international condemnation, regional isolation, and—if need be—strong sanctions." Tough talk. But will he back it up?

■ The elder statesmen of Central and Eastern Europe have got together to write an open letter to President Obama, and an extraordinary document it is. The 22 signatories include former dissidents who became heads of state, including Lech Walesa and Václav Havel, plus other presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers from the years after the fall of Communism. These men and women are representative of the gratitude, indeed outright love, that their countrymen feel for the United States because it freed them from the Soviet grip. But now America's popularity and influence are declining. "All is not well either in our region or in the transatlantic relationship." They see Russia intimidating its neighbors, "pursuing a 19th-century agenda with 21st-century tactics." A stronger NATO would make them feel more secure. Nor should Russia be allowed to undermine America's planned missile-defense installations or disrupt energy supplies in Europe. Expressing themselves with unmistakable sorrow, they feel neglected, taken for granted. Given that the Obama administration is busy promising an open hand to many other countries—and many of these unfriendly—they are quite right to be anxious.

■ Natalya Estimerova is the latest to pay the price in Russia for documenting the abuse of human rights. Part Chechen herself, she worked in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya long since reduced to rubble and ruin by the ruthless war waged by Russia against local separatists. A historian by training, Estimerova traced prisoners and hidden graves, and handed her dossiers to prosecutors. She confronted Ramzan Kadyrov, the Chechen president put in by Moscow to do the dirty work and himself

NATALIA ESTIMIROVA: REUTERS

accused of participating in torture and executions. Then a white car, or possibly a van, drew up outside her house, and she was heard shouting that she was being kidnapped. The car was waved through checkpoints, an indication that it was recognized as official. Later that day, Estimerova was murdered and her bullet-ridden corpse thrown out by the roadside. Human-rights activists accuse Kadyrov of responsibility for the crime, but in all such cases he makes the implausible claim that some of his enemies are killing others of his enemies for the purpose of discrediting him—as though that were necessary. At least two other opponents of his have been killed in recent weeks. As usual in today's Russia, there is no likelihood that Kadyrov or anyone else will be brought to justice.

■ Anti-Christian rioting in the town of Gojra in eastern Pakistan claimed the lives of several persons, including women and children. Some were shot, some burned to death in their houses. Twenty others were injured. Fifty houses were burned. The occasion of the rioting was a rumor that pages from the Koran had been desecrated at a Christian wedding. Christians make up around 5 percent of Pakistan's population and enjoy theoretical protection from the majority's abuses. But when that majority includes uneducated masses and jihadist fanatics, legal protections can be very theoretical indeed.

■ In early July a squad of police burst into a restaurant in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and arrested several women on charges of indecency. The nature of the indecency was that the women were wearing trousers. Most of the perps accepted summary punishment of ten lashes each. Lubna Hussein, however, chose to go to trial in hopes of getting the law changed. If convicted at trial, Mrs. Hussein, a thirtysomething widow who works as a journalist, will face 40 lashes administered in public. She is, however, a lady of admirable spirit, and has been bravely defiant of the Islamic authorities, sending out printed invitations to her trial and averring that "I am ready to be whipped not 40 but 40,000 times." We wish her well, and hope she will not be too disturbed by the *fatwas* that are surely being called down on her even as we write.

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■ Out of the blue, the British home secretary, Jacqui Smith, put Michael Savage on a list of people banned from entering Britain. Savage's San Francisco radio show is certainly nasty, but who knew it had such long-range power? The others on that list were extremists and gangsters of one sort or another, most of them Islamists. And Savage? According to Jacqui, he could foment hatred in a way "likely to cause inter-community tension or even violence." Leaked memoranda revealed that in truth he was on the list only to counter-balance all the Islamists. Meanwhile Jacqui was on quite another list—also leaked to the national press—of those claiming parliamentary expenses to which they might not be entitled. The nation was suddenly entertained to learn about her bath plug, for instance, which cost the taxpayer 89 pence, and about porno films bought for her lonesome husband. She protested that she hadn't been trained for a job of the home secretary's importance, whereupon, in a comic-opera finale, Prime Minister Gordon Brown sacked her. For years to come, Savage need only mention her name to be sure of a laugh.

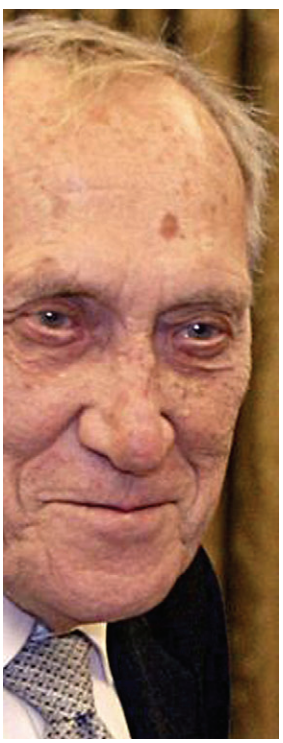
■ It is a staple of Palestinian propaganda that Israeli authorities smuggle drugs into the Palestinian territories in order to corrupt young Arabs. Hamas, the terrorist group now in charge of the Gaza Strip, has come up with a new variation on this well-worn theme. Hamas police spokesman Islam Shahwan claims that aphrodisiac chewing gum has been found in the territory, and its distribution linked to "Zionist intelligence services." A young Palestinian girl had experienced "dubious side effects" (not further specified) after chewing the gum. Given Israel's well-known demographic anxieties (population annual growth-rate percentages: Israel 1.67, Gaza 3.35), it all seems wildly unlikely; but then, so does the prospect of sanity's breaking out in Hamas-ruled Gaza anytime soon.

■ The Italian weekly magazine *L'espresso* published transcripts of conversations it claims took place between Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and a young lady named Patrizia D'Addario, who is a professional escort. Sig.na D'Addario released the tapes because Berlusconi did not arrange a zoning permit in return for her services, as he had promised to do. When she pressed him on the matter, the PM offered her a seat in the European Parliament instead. *Che ingiustizia!* The tapes, however, are not unflattering to 72-year-old Berlusconi. On one, apparently recorded at breakfast following an entire night of transactions, the lady reported having been completely satisfied for the first time in several months. When confronted with *L'espresso*'s revelations, the PM responded: "*Non sono un santo*." And people say Europe is finished!

■ The *New York Times* had to publish what its own public editor called "an especially embarrassing correction," addressing seven errors in one story. Since the story was an obituary for Walter Cronkite, whose reporting did a lot to fix in the public mind the mistaken idea that the Tet Offensive was a great military victory for the Viet Cong, we can't help but find the incident a fitting sendoff.

■ Cool enough for you? This July, Chicago experienced its lowest average temperature since at least 1942, when the recording station was moved to its current spot; New York City was colder than it's been for at least a century; and in Minneapolis, John Hinderaker of the Powerline blog reported witnessing "something I've never seen before: a man wearing a winter coat in July." Proof that global warming is a fraud? Of course not. It's disappointing that none of our clairvoyant atmospheric scientists predicted this year's cold spell, but quite understandable: Temperatures are affected by many things, including long-term cycles and sunspots, which can overwhelm the likely effects of greenhouse gases. So climate-change skeptics should be cautious, exercise restraint, and remember that one year's results cannot prove or disprove a theory—just as climate-change believers like Al Gore will undoubtedly do the next time there's a heat wave . . .

■ It has been a long while since the Philippines was a fixture in the international news. In the 1980s, along with South Africa and a few other countries, it fairly dominated the front pages. These are the essential facts: A man named Benigno Aquino was a prominent leader of the opposition. The dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, first jailed him, then exiled him. When he returned from exile in 1983, he was shot dead, even before his feet were able to touch the tarmac. Aquino's widow, Corazon, became the symbol of the opposition. In 1986, she challenged Marcos in an election. This was "people power." The candidate was known as "Cory" the world over, and her color was yellow. People in countries far and wide wore it, in solidarity with her and her movement. She won the election; but Marcos tried to cheat her of it. Crowds massed in the streets. The situation was volatile, dangerous. The Reagan administration finessed Marcos's departure, and that was that. Corazon Aquino served a six-year term, then gave way to future leaders. The Philippines has a great many problems, but holds on to democracy. Aquino—with her religious dignity and democratic spirit—performed well at a critical hour. She took the dramatic and awful circumstances of her life and did good with them. She has now died at 76. R.I.P.



PAUL MORSE/AFP/WHITE HOUSE

■ Leszek Kolakowski was a crucially important anti-Communist thinker; his three-volume work *Main Currents of Marxism* (1976–78) has deservedly been considered a classic ever since its publication. But Kolakowski was more than just a politically engaged intellectual: He was a lasting exemplar of the life of the mind at its very best. His writing is suffused with a love of truth, a love that manifested itself in the scrupulous fairness of his accurate and sympathetic presentation of differing views. His 1995 book *God Owes Us Nothing: A Brief Remark on Pascal's Religion and on the Spirit of Jansenism* is a model of how to write about spiritual matters, which were Kolakowski's central concern. Leszek Kolakowski died on July 17, at age 81. R.I.P.

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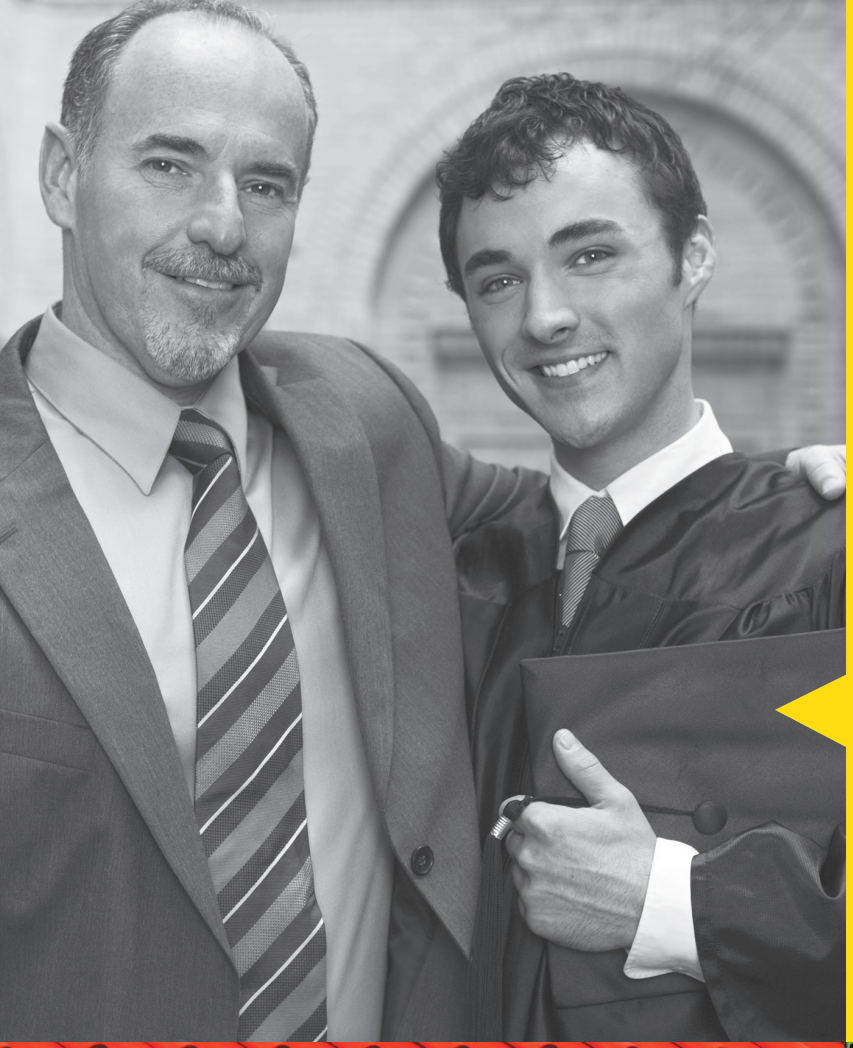

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■ Ernest Lefever grew up as a Christian pacifist, and his conscience kept him out of uniform during World War II. Over time, he maintained his faith but came to realize that America's most aggressive foes sometimes require a fight, especially the totalitarians. He endured a fight of his own in 1981, when President Reagan asked him to serve as assistant secretary for human rights at the Department of State. In a fit of anti-anti-Communism, Senate liberals rejected the nomination. Lefever returned to the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a think tank he had founded in 1976, and ran it until 1989. There, he helped steer the Evangelical movement toward a serious engagement with public-policy problems. His research undermined the credibility of the World Council of Churches, a left-wing front group. When he wasn't promoting freedom at home and abroad, he enjoyed stamp collecting, woodworking, and limericks. Dead at 89. R.I.P.

■ Sidney Zion, lawyer, journalist, and raspy-voiced raconteur, though born in Passaic, N.J., was a mainstay of New York life and nightlife for almost 50 years. If you went into Elaine's, he would be holding down a table and commenting on the passing scene, including you. Zion had anecdotes and opinions about everyone and everything, from the Pentagon Papers to Roy Cohn to mobsters. (One of Zion's best: After a mob informant was defenestrated, a former colleague offered a toast, "To the canary, what could sing, but couldn't fly.") When his 18-year-old daughter Libby died from mistakes in her care in a New York hospital, Zion became a crusader, ultimately pressuring the state to limit the shifts of interns and residents to 24 hours straight, down from an impossible 36. Dead at 75. R.I.P.

■ A week after the death of Henry Allingham, another British veteran of World War I, Harry Patch, passed away. He manned a machine gun in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and fought in the battle of Passchendaele (or Third Ypres) beginning in June 1917. Over the next five months half a million men lost their lives. Patch was spared until September, when a German shell killed three members of his crew and injured him, taking him out of the war. As a centenarian, Patch spoke with passion of the war's pointlessness. "It was not worth it, it was not worth one let alone all the millions" of lives lost. "The Germans suffered the same as we did," he would add. Yet Patch performed air-raid duty in World War II, and admitted that he would have shot the Kaiser and Hitler to save lives. So would we all, except for the most dedicated pacifists, but the opportunity never arose. Dead at 111. R.I.P.

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HEALTH CARE

Fight the Fallbacks

IN 2007, Barack Obama told a union group about his plans for health care. "I don't think we're going to be able to eliminate employer coverage immediately. There's going to be potentially some transition process." The "public option" that his administration is promoting—a government-run insurance program open to all Americans—is part of that transition. It will both compete with private insurers and be able to shift its costs to them. Over time private insurers will be squeezed out and we will be left with a government monopoly on health insurance: single payer. But don't take our word for it. Rep. Barney Frank, a supporter of that monopoly, has recently said that the public option is "the best way to lead to single payer." Liberal representative Jan Schakowsky has echoed the sentiment.

Removing the government insurer from the health-care bills in Congress would, unfortunately, merely slow down this transition. Even without that public option, all the leading bills rely on mandates, regulations, and subsidies that will increase the government's role in health care. The mandates—effectively, they are taxes—will reduce wages, limit new hires, and increase prices. The subsidies, hugely expensive from the outset, can be expected to grow with time to cover a larger and larger share of the population, just as Medicaid has done, and for the same political reasons. The bills also contemplate having the federal government tell doctors and hospitals what constitutes appropriate medical practice. Much more ill than good seems likely to come of that.

Most of the Democrats believe that markets cannot work in health care or can do so only under the direction of the government. Under duress they may make concessions on the speed with which we move to a new, government-heavy system. But they are not going to change direction. Those of us who disagree with their basic point of view should be clear about our goal: to stop this train, not just slow it down.

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ROMAN GENN

Adam Smith for Sick People

Conservatives should address the plight of those with preexisting conditions

BY RAMESH PONNURU

THERE'S a phrase that comes up a lot more when liberals talk about health-care policy than when conservatives do: "preexisting conditions." It's one of the trickier problems of our current system of financing health care. Let's say that you get a long-term illness—like cancer, or diabetes—and then lose your job. How do you get insurance again? What rational insurance company is going to want your business?

Liberals have a simple-sounding solution to the problem: Make it illegal for insurance companies to discriminate based on preexisting conditions. In a recent e-mail from the White House to its supporters, the first complaint lodged against the current system was its treatment of these conditions—and the ban on discrimination was the first "basic consumer protection" demanded.

Conservatives have emphasized other concerns: chiefly the system's escalating costs and people's lack of control over their insurance policies. Conservatives' preferred policy to increase patient control is to make it easier for people to buy insurance for themselves (as opposed to relying on their employers or the government). One way to accomplish this goal is to allow people to buy insurance across state lines, thus leaping over their own state's regulations. Another is to end the tax penalty on individual insurance purchases. To reduce costs, conservatives generally favor changing tax policy so as not to reward people for buying more expensive policies.

These policies would help healthy people buy cheaper and more secure insurance policies. But the policies would not, directly, help sick people. When John McCain adopted the conservative policy mix, one of the chief criticisms—and the most defensible of the major liberal criticisms—was that it offered nothing for people with preexisting conditions and might even worsen their plight. Elizabeth Edwards said that she had one thing in common with McCain: As cancer survivors, "neither one of us would be covered by his health policy."

While Mrs. Edwards was exaggerating, what she was getting at was that if McCain lost his insurance, or she lost hers, his plan would not guarantee that any insurance company would offer him a policy at an affordable price. Liberals' plans would. Over time, McCain's plan would cause employers to drop their insurance coverage as a larger and larger proportion of employees bought their own policies. Conservative reforms are more or less designed to have this effect. But one unintended effect would be that some people with preexisting conditions would lose their coverage and find themselves in an individual market where they would have few real options.

Even some Republicans in Congress who generally favor free-market health policies therefore look favorably on banning insurance companies' screening of customers for preexisting conditions. If Democrats fail to enact comprehensive reforms, it is generally assumed that their fallback position will consist of some proposals to expand coverage and some "insurance-market reforms"—including a ban on discrimination based on preexisting conditions.

Such a ban, by itself, would be unworkable. For one thing, insurers would have an incentive to figure out hard-to-police ways of avoiding sick customers or driving them away. But there's a deeper flaw in the idea.

Mark Pauly, a professor of health-care management at the Wharton School of Business, and his collaborators have found that individual insurance markets are reasonably good at pooling risks—if people buy policies when they are relatively healthy and insurers are allowed to charge higher prices to higher-risk customers. But if people can wait until they are sick and then get insurance at the same price that everyone else does, why would anyone pay premiums while

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healthy? The more people understood that logic, the more insurance markets would collapse. Healthy people would stop buying insurance; insurance premiums would therefore rise; and more healthy people would then quit.

To break this vicious circle the government would have to force healthy people to buy insurance whether or not they thought it offered them a good deal. This mandate would itself lead to other government interventions. Once the government said that everyone must buy a minimum level of insurance, every health-care provider would want his services included in that minimum package. As their lobbying succeeded, the floor on the price of insurance would rise. So would the number of people who needed subsidies to comply with the mandate.

To ban discrimination on the basis of preexisting conditions is not, then, a clean and limited reform of the insurance markets—not a mere tweak to insurance companies' business models. It is more like a prohibition on the act of providing health insurance. What coverage is supposed to insure against is, after all, the risk that the policyholder will get sick and have to pay for medical care. When a company covers the health costs of a new, already-sick customer, the service it is providing is not insurance. Nobel laureate Kenneth Arrow grasped this point in a classic 1963 paper for the *American Economic Review*: "On a lifetime insurance basis, insurance against chronic illness makes sense, since this is both highly unpredictable and highly significant in costs. Among people who already have chronic illness, or symptoms which reliably indicate it, insurance in the strict sense is probably pointless."

We have already gone some distance down the road from true insurance. What we call "insurance policies" are in large part socialized pre-payment plans for health expenses. The good news is that we have reason to expect that markets can do quite a bit to mitigate the problem of preexisting conditions over the long run. In a society with a thriving individual insurance market and a much lower degree of reliance on employer-provided insurance, people would have a strong incentive to buy insurance against the risk of major medical expenses. They would have a strong incentive to buy renewable policies (policies that they could renew at roughly the same rates, even after they got sick) early in their lives, or their children's lives.

The only way to reconcile our highly mobile labor markets with the "lifetime insurance" Kenneth Arrow discussed is to separate insurance from employment—either by having individuals buy insurance or by having the government do it for them. Professor Pauly's research already shows that because of the availability of renewable policies, people with individual insurance who get sick lose that coverage less often than people who have group insurance and get sick.

The finance economist John Cochrane has explained how renewable policies are compatible with a continuing choice of insurance companies and thus with competitive discipline on those companies. His insight is that a (true) health-insurance policy packages two products. The first is insurance against medical expenses that might arise over, say, the next year. The second is insurance against the risk that one's health status will deteriorate so that the first component will cost more in subsequent years. He goes on to suggest various ways that the market could decouple these products, enabling people to buy "health status insurance" and thus combining the advantages of renewability with the ability to keep shopping around among insurers. A market of this sort is beginning to launch. Federal policy choices will determine whether it takes off or crashes.

The problem that people have in paying for the treatment of preexisting conditions is, in large part, an artifact of government interference in the market. But even if the problem would arise much less frequently in a market-driven system, it would still arise. Not everyone would buy insurance in time. And there is also the problem of those people who are already sick today: those whose preexisting conditions preexist a workable market. If they are essentially uninsurable, some other method of helping them with their medical bills will have to be found.

Many states operate "high-risk pools" for such people, but these tend to have long waiting lists. (They're also misnamed: They're really subsidized cost-sharing arrangements for sick people.) Federal funding could help, and even a large increase would be much cheaper than the comprehensive liberal reforms being discussed in Washington. But the states should have primary responsibility, in part because the best way to run these programs is not clear. Insurers shouldn't be encouraged to offload their costs to these programs. Any federal assistance should also be structured carefully. Done wrong, such assistance could recreate the incentives of Medicaid, which reward states for expanding benefits and thus encourage them to bankrupt themselves.

The question of what to do about people with preexisting conditions highlights the political delicacy of free-market health-care reform. The advantages of a well-developed individual market are a reason to seek such reform on as quick a timetable as possible. On the other hand, the fact that our current system of hidden subsidies protects some of these people, albeit inefficiently, is a reason to go slow. Neither end of this dilemma offers a justification for abandoning free markets, especially since doing so is likely to retard medical innovation and the diffusion of new treatments. What people with preexisting conditions need most are cures. **NR**

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Mr. Netanyahu's Offer (I)

Would it bring peace to the tortured Middle East?

In a complete turnabout from previous positions, but probably also yielding to enormous pressure by President Obama, Israel's Prime Minister "Bibi" Netanyahu has declared his willingness to accept a Palestinian state.

What are the facts?

A generous offer. Since the "two-state solution" has long been declared to be the Holy Grail of the Palestinians, one would have expected that Mr. Netanyahu's announcement be greeted with cheers and hosannas. That, however, not surprisingly perhaps, was not the case. In fact, the Palestinians and all others involved declared it to be an insult and a "non-starter." The principal objections were that Mr. Netanyahu insisted that the newly created Palestinian state would have to be totally demilitarized, and that its air space would be available to the IAF (Israeli Air Force); that Jerusalem would remain undivided as the capital of the Jewish state; that the "Palestinian refugees" would, if they so desired, be returned to the newly formed state and not to Israel; that the Palestinians acknowledge Israel as the state of the Jews; and, finally, that he did not commit for the "settlements" to be dismantled. We shall address some of these objections in this message, the rest in a future message.

> "As Abba Eban, Israel's former Foreign Secretary put it: 'The Arabs will never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.'"

The "Settlements." Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is the ancient Biblical homeland of the Jewish people. This area is part of the Palestinian Mandate, which was declared by the Balfour Declaration and by the mandate of the League of Nations, to be the homeland of the Jewish people. After the 1948 War of Israel's Liberation this area remained in possession of the Kingdom of Jordan, which declared sovereignty over the area. The only possible rationale for the conclusion that this area is Palestinian land is that it is encompassed by the 1949 armistice line. There is absolutely no other reason. This area has never been Palestinian land. In fact, never before the creation of the State of Israel has there ever been a Palestinian people or a Palestinian country anywhere in the long course of human history. The Palestinians were never until recent times in any control over the area. At the very most, the area could be described as "disputed." In fact, a very good case could be made that Jews have a better right than the Arabs to live there. What a shame that even the leaders of our country cannot see this fundamental truth. And don't let's forget that over one million Arabs live in Israel unmolested and nobody gets exercised about that.

Demilitarization. Not so long ago, Israel unilaterally evacuated every last Jewish family from Gaza. One would have hoped that the Palestinians, grateful for being rid of the hated Jews and no longer having to suffer their presence, would have shown their gratitude for that "liberation." Instead, almost from the very first day, they bombarded Israeli cities with thousands of rockets. Eventually, the patience of Israel snapped and it invaded Gaza to put a stop to this outrage. It has to be clear to all that having had such bad experience with Gaza, Israel is fully justified to expect that if statehood were ultimately granted to the Palestinians, and if demilitarization were not imposed and strictly supervised, the Palestinians of the "West Bank" would be equally inclined to attack Israel on a daily basis. Instead of being confronted by the insular Gaza, Israel would be surrounded totally by those who are sworn to destroy it. Full demilitarization would have to be a key requirement of any Palestinian statehood. Without it, virtually all of Israel – its population centers, its industries, its military installations and its international airport – would be under the gun. Life in Israel would be virtually impossible. How could anybody possibly think otherwise?

Return of the "Refugees." During the 1948 War of Liberation, about 650,000 Arabs, goaded by their leaders, fled the nascent state of Israel. They and their descendants wish to "return" to Israel. That is a bizarre request. The principal purpose of a Palestinian state would obviously have to be the ingathering and settling of the "Palestinian refugees" and not to foist them onto Israel. Injecting them into Israel would undermine the Jewish state and smooth the path to its destruction. And that is, indeed, the rub. The principal intent of the Arabs is not the creation of a state, but, as they repeat over and over, the destruction of Israel, which they call the "cancer on the Arab body." And don't let's forget that about 800,000 Jews, who escaped barely with their lives from Arab countries during the War of Liberation in 1948 and during the Six-Day War in 1967, were quickly absorbed into the state of Israel and are now at least one-half of the total population. The Arabs, in contrast, have kept their "refugees" in miserable refugee camps for the last 60+ years, on the dole of the world – mostly that of the United States.

There is little likelihood that Mr. Netanyahu's generous offer, however it might ultimately be modified, will be accepted by the Arabs. Because, if that were the objective, they could have had their own state for over seventy years. But whatever was offered was never sufficient. As Abba Eban, Israel's former Foreign Secretary, so well put it: "The Arabs will never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity." Sadly, therefore, there is little question that Mr. Netanyahu's generous offer of a separate state for the Palestinians will again be rejected – most likely even being followed by another "intifada."

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Gerardo Joffe, President

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Three Strikes

The Democrats' health-reform problem begins with the questions Democrats ask

BY JOHN C. GOODMAN

How can Washington have spent so much time debating health care and still have failed to come up with a reasonable reform? By starting from the wrong premises. There are three basic questions to be asked about the design of any health-care system. If you answer these questions the right way, the path to reform is rather easy and straightforward. But if you answer even one question the wrong way, you will get caught up in a cycle of complexity—with fix upon fix, each trying to patch up the problems created by the previous one.

Hint: Right answers are ones that give people incentives to meet their own needs without imposing costs on others. Wrong answers are ones that give people perverse incentives to impose costs on others while pursuing their own interests.

The first question is: *How is health insurance to be subsidized?* Is the government subsidy to be uniform across all ways of obtaining insurance (as it is in most countries)? Or will the subsidies differ according to how the insurance is acquired? Currently, we have the latter condition: The subsidies are heavily tilted toward employer-provided group insurance and away from individually acquired insurance. Every dollar of premium paid by an employer avoids a 15.3 percent FICA payroll tax and—in the case of a middle-income family—a 25 percent federal income tax and a 6 percent (on average) state income tax. Avoiding these taxes amounts to receiving a subsidy equal to almost half the cost of the insurance. People who must purchase their own insurance, by contrast, get virtually no tax relief. At the workplace, insurance is purchased with before-tax dollars. Away from the workplace, it must be purchased with after-tax dollars. The poor individual purchaser must earn twice as much money to be able to buy the same insurance.

The health-reform bills in Congress would create even more lopsided subsidies—this time tilted toward individual purchase in a "health insurance exchange," and away from purchase through one's employer. Under Sen. Edward Kennedy's bill, the highest premium anyone would have to pay in the exchange would be 12.5 percent of his income. The additional cost would be paid by the taxpayers. In the House bill, the highest premium would be as low as 3 percent of income for someone earning up to 150 percent of the poverty level ($33,000). That means a low-income worker would pay only $992 for a family plan whose actual cost is $13,000 (about average for employer-provided coverage). The net subsidy would be $12,008. By contrast, if an employer purchased this same insurance, the implicit subsidy would be only the amount of payroll tax he avoided, or $5,060.

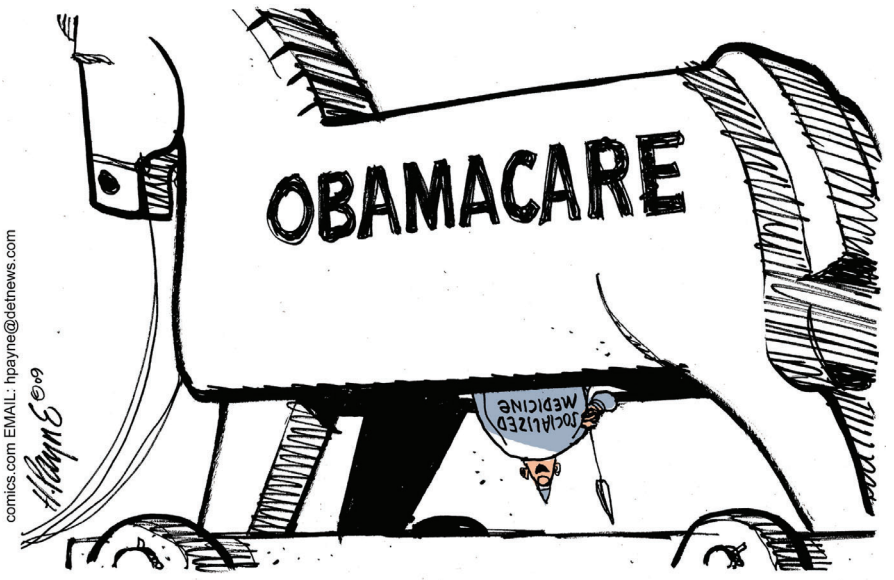
You don't have to be a math genius to figure out that the exchange is a better deal. Indeed, if a worker had been getting insurance from his employer, he and the employer could drop the plan at work, agree on higher wages instead of premiums, purchase the same plan in the exchange, and end up with almost $7,000 in extra take-home pay. Great deal for the worker—but that gain will be at the expense of the taxpayers. And after millions of people make this choice, the taxpayers will end up paying billions of dollars in subsidies, without any real change in health-insurance coverage.

Nonuniform subsidies create havoc. Under the current system, they make portability—the ability to keep your health-insurance plan when you change jobs—virtually impossible. Under the bills in Congress, more than half the population will try to shift from group to individual coverage—creating an enormous taxpayer burden without any real benefit.

The second question is: *How is health insurance to be priced?* Are the premiums going to reflect expected costs, as they do in other insurance markets? Or are they going to be independent of expected costs? Under "community rating" (the pricing scheme preferred by congressional Democrats), insurers must charge the same premium for a given plan to everyone, regardless of health condition. This creates perverse incentives for both buyers and sellers.

Buyers will tend to choose lean plans when they are healthy (and don't expect to use many services) and rich plans when they are sick (and plan to use a lot). They will tend to choose HMO coverage when healthy (and choice of doctors does not seem very important) and fee-for-service insurance when they have a serious problem (and choice of doctors is critical). More generally, if the premium is the same for everyone, people will tend to underinsure themselves when they are healthy and overinsure themselves when they are sick.

Sellers of health plans will seek to attract the healthy (on whom they make a profit) and avoid the sick (from whom they incur losses). After enrollment, they will tend to overprovide to the healthy



Mr. Goodman is the president of the National Center for Policy Analysis.

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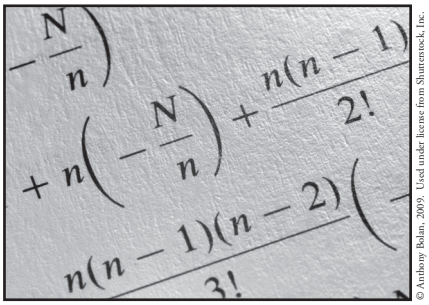

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(in order to keep them and attract new enrollees) and underprovide to the sick (in order to encourage their exodus and discourage new enrollees like them).

Much regulation would be needed to try to keep insurers from acting on these incentives. But there is a better way: Let premiums reflect real risks. One out of five seniors is enrolled in a (private) Medicare Advantage plan that receives a risk-rated premium, calculated on the basis of up to 75 different variables. In this system, health insurers will no longer want to drive the sickest enrollees away, because these patients will be paying higher premiums. Employers could do the same for their employees.

The third question is: *How much health insurance is to be paid for by a third party (one other than the recipient or the provider)?* Will a third party pay every bill (as in Britain and Canada)? Or will individuals be able to self-insure, managing some of their health-care dollars in an account they own and control? If the former, patients will have incentives to overconsume, using up health-care resources until their value at the margin (the value of the last unit purchased) is almost zero. And health plans will have to employ rationing devices to control demand. If patients are using their own money, however, they won't spend a dollar on care unless the care is worth a dollar.

There is already a good model for this patient-centered alternative. In the Medicaid Cash and Counseling pilot program, homebound disabled patients manage their own budgets. They can pay market prices and hire and fire those who provide them with health services. Satisfaction rates approach 100 percent (something unheard of in health care anywhere else on the planet). But other Medicaid patients have no such freedom. They cannot add to Medicaid reimbursement rates and pay market prices at walk-in clinics, surgicenters, and urgent-care centers. They cannot choose a doctor they like and pay his usual fee. I have no idea what the satisfaction rate is in Medicaid generally. But since being in Medicaid is only marginally better than being uninsured, I suspect it is not very high.

On these three questions, just one wrong answer makes a sensible health-care policy highly unlikely. But with three out of three answers wrong (the situation of Congress), workable health reform is a metaphysical impossibility. NR

Catching Up To Mexico

Illegal immigration is depleting California's human capital and ravaging its economy

BY ALEX ALEXIEV

CALIFORNIA'S financial unraveling has prompted a long-overdue debate about taxes, regulation, and government spending, but the state's media and government continue to ignore what could be an even greater problem: the irreparable damage to California's human capital that nearly 30 years of unrestrained illegal immigration has achieved.

This is not an immigration problem, or even an illegal-immigration problem, per se. A strong case could be made that, in terms of educational achievement, industriousness, and entrepreneurial acumen, Asian immigrants to California have proven superior to white natives of the state. Therefore, if California were to experience a wave of mass immigration from Asia, its long-term economic prospects would be improved. Today's Hispanic immigrants would probably have the same effect if they came from the top 10 to 20 percent of their society—according to those same measures of human capital—rather than from its bottom rungs. But the influx has instead been composed mainly of the poorly educated, the unskilled, and the illiterate. Such immigrants will likely soon dominate the state's overall population and politics.

In 2005, the California K–12 school system was 48.5 percent Hispanic, compared with 30.9 percent white. By now it is above 50 percent Hispanic. Two-thirds of kindergarten students were Hispanic, most of them unable to speak English.

For a closer glimpse of what's in store for California, look at the Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest in California and the second largest in the country. Of its roughly 700,000 students, almost three-quarters are Hispanic, 8.9 percent are white, and 11.2 percent are black. More than half of the Latino students (about 300,000) are "English learners" and, depending on whether you believe the district or independent scholars, anywhere between a third and a half drop out of high school, following significant attrition in middle school. A recent study by UC Santa Barbara's California Dropout Research Project estimates that high-school dropouts in 2007 alone will cost the state $24.2 billion in future economic losses.

Even those who graduate aren't necessarily headed to success. According to one study, 69 percent of Latino high-school graduates "do not meet college requirements or satisfy prerequisites for most jobs that pay a living wage." It is difficult to see how the majority-Hispanic labor force of the future can provide the skills that the sophisticated Los Angeles economy demands. Already studies show that as many as 700,000 Los Angeles Latinos and some 65 percent of the city's illegal immigrants work in L.A.'s huge underground economy.

The unhappy picture in Los Angeles is replicated to one degree or another across much of California and is taking a huge toll on the state's economic competitiveness and long-term prospects. California's educational system, once easily the best in the country, is today mired in mediocrity—near the bottom among the 50 states as judged by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests in math, science, reading, and writing. And for the first time in its history, California is experiencing an increase in adult illiteracy. In 2003, it had the highest adult illiteracy in the United States, 23 percent—nearly 50 percent higher than a decade earlier. In some counties (Imperial at 41 percent, Los Angeles at 33 percent) illiteracy approaches sub-Saharan levels.

Perhaps even more important than the collapse of educational achievement among the lower strata is a deterioration of the higher education that was for decades the basis of California's preeminence in science and technology. California currently ranks 40th among the 50 states in college-attendance rates, and it already faces a significant shortage of college graduates. Studies have shown that the economy will need 40 percent of its workers to be college-educated by 2020, compared with today's 32 percent. Given the aging white population

Mr. Alexiev is a visiting fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C.

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WARNING: IS YOUR MEMORY FADING?

Breakthrough medical research reveals "forgotten moments" may be caused by "brain starvation"

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Do you remember your first kiss but not where you left your car keys? You're not alone. Millions are discovering that as they age, their short term memory and mental sharpness seem to be slipping. The cause of these inconvenient "gaps" in memory sits deep inside your brain, among the billions of tiny nerve connections. New brain cell growth starts dropping after age 25, and then dramatically after 50, starting a downward spiral that can lead to everything from those frustrating "senior moments" to even more severe memory breakdowns.

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Studies have shown that the efficiency of brain cells declines after years of free radical damage and stress. It was long believed that as we got older, memory problems were inevitable. But medical experts have revealed that **the downward memory spiral is reversible.** Compelling new research shows that there's a simple way to stimulate new brain cell growth that can boost your memory, improve your focus and restore your mind's mental sharpness.

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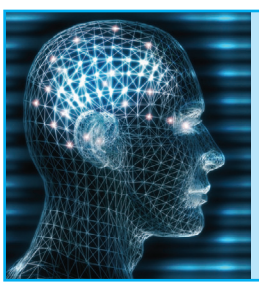

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(average age, 42), many of these new graduates will have to come from the burgeoning Latino immigrant population (average age, 26). By one estimate, this would require tripling of the number of college-educated immigrants, an impossibility if current trends hold. The state's inability to improve the educational attainment of its residents will result in a "substantial decline in per capita income" and "place California last among the 50 states" by 2020, according to a study by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

The mediocre education system, along with the unfriendly business climate and confiscatory tax regime, is driving educated, middle-class Californians out of the state. Between 2000 and 2005, more people with college degrees left California than came in, according to research by the Hewlett Foundation. Since then this trend has accelerated, and the state lost 2.2 million members of its young, educated, tax-paying middle class between 2004 and 2007. IRS data show that of recent migrants from the Golden State to places like Texas and Oklahoma, who average 29 years of age, 58 percent have received at least some college education and 53 percent own their homes.

We are witnessing a highly advanced and prosperous state turning into the exact opposite in just one generation.

In short, we are witnessing a highly advanced and prosperous state, long endowed with superior human capital, turning into the exact opposite in just one generation. What can be done to stop this race to the bottom? The answer is simple: California and Washington need to enforce existing immigration law. Unfortunately, it is difficult to convince the public that this is necessary, so deeply entrenched are myths about illegal immigration.

One myth is that because America is a country of immigrants and has successfully absorbed waves of immigration in the past, it can absorb this wave. But the argument neglects two key differences between past waves and the current influx. First, the immigrant population is more than double today what it was following the most massive previous immigration wave (that of the late 19th century). Second, and much more important, as scholars from the Manhattan Institute have shown, earlier immigrants were much more likely to bring with them useful skills. Some Hispanic immigrants certainly do integrate, but most do not. Research has shown that even after 20 years in the country, most illegal aliens (the overwhelming majority of whom are Hispanic) and their children remain poor, unskilled, and culturally isolated—they constitute a new permanent underclass.

Perhaps the most disingenuous myth about illegal immigrants is that they do not impose any cost on society. The reality is that even those who work—and half do not, according to the Pew Hispanic Center—cannot subsist on the wages they receive and depend on public assistance to a large degree. Research on Los Angeles immigrants by Harvard University scholar George J. Borjas shows that 40.1 percent of immigrant families with non-citizen heads of household receive welfare, compared with 12.7 percent of households with native-born heads. Illegal immigrants also increase public expenditures on health care, education, and prisons. In California today, illegal immigrants' cost to the taxpayer is estimated to be $13 billion—half the state's budget deficit.

The state should stop providing welfare and other social services to illegal aliens—as existing statutes demand—and severely punish employers who break the law by hiring illegal immigrants. This would immediately remove powerful economic incentives for illegal immigration, and millions of illegal aliens would return to their countries. Instead, with President Obama in the White House and the Democrats controlling Congress, an amnesty for the country's 13 million illegal immigrants may be soon to come.

Milton Friedman once said that unrestrained immigration and the welfare state do not mix. Must we wait until California catches up with Mexico to realize how right he was? **NR**

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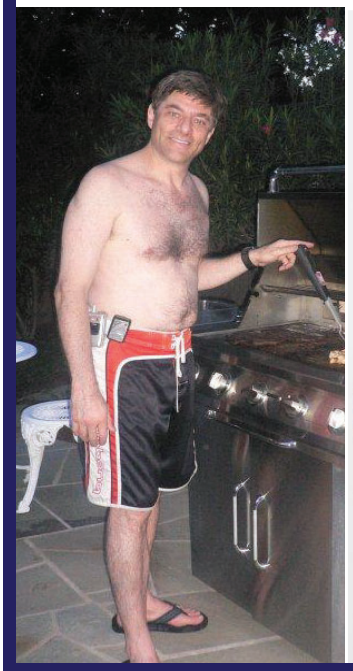

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Obamaniacs On the Couch

If the Self-object fails to socialize the Self's health-care . . .

BY ROB LONG

THIS is going to get very Freudian, but please bear with me.

In psychoanalytic terms, the Self has a narcissistic need to form a relationship with something called the Self-object. That can be anything: a spouse, a pet, a hot dog, a vacation, even a president of the United States.

The Self-object becomes a kind of extension of the Self. The Self desires it, identifies with it, transfers emotional meaning to it, relies on it for ego-strength and even a kind of love.

The Self/Self-object relationship is normal, apparently, despite its creepy name. But it also carries with it certain enormous risks: Spouses drift apart, pets die, hot dogs get cold, it rains on vacations, and presidents of the United States, even really awesome ones who are cool and promise to bring hope and change, can turn out to be not much better than any other meretricious, power-grabbing pol.

When the Self/Self-object relationship breaks down—for whatever reason—a number of things can occur. Mourning, anger, depression—all of these are natural, normal reactions to the disappearance or death of the Self-object. We've all been there. Perfectly normal stuff. Not pleasant, of course—who wants it to rain on his holiday? who wants a beloved pet to die? who wants a cold hot dog?—but we muddle through, with support from our friends and the help, if needed, of Old Rip Van Winkle bourbon or other psycho-pharmaceuticals, and we go on to create a blizzard of new relationships with new Self-objects, and the cycle wheels along.

We're not a terribly attractive species, when you get right down to it—we're needy and graspy and awfully nuts—but there's a predictable quality to our emotional desperation that's comforting. Plus, emotional neediness creates useful ancillary products: It's given us painting, haute cuisine, country music, and golf, among other things. So all in all, not a bad exchange.

Sometimes, however, it doesn't go down so smoothly. Sometimes the relationship between the Self and the Self-object gets ugly. And as the summer wears on and a certain Self-object president of the United States fails to get his health-care package passed, fails to stimulate a sluggish economy, fails to stem rising unemployment, fails to influence events in either Iran or Honduras, fails to keep his lofty promises on taxes, Guantanamo, victory in Afghanistan, transparent government, or anything, really, save the planting of a White House Victory Garden, the cascade of failures and broken promises and outright lies will shatter the relationship between the Self-object (Obama) and the Self (the credulous, trembling acolytes in the press and the star-struck thumbsuckers in the electorate). It will all end in what psychoanalysts call, I'm pretty sure, a shrieking, major freak-out.

I'm paraphrasing, of course. But that's what we're in for.

Some of it is going to be directed at us, the muttering skeptics from last autumn who didn't see what all the shouting was about in the first place. Poor, out-in-the-cold conservatives are going to be blamed for Obama's lack of progress on health care and stimulus and unemployment. The Self is going to zero in on the seven or eight remaining Republicans in the federal government and blame them for obstructing a plan they have no ability to obstruct. Look, in the coming weeks, for stories to dot the Self's media outlets about the Tea Parties and the town-hall demonstrations that have disrupted the summer recesses of so many Democratic senators and congressmen. The stories will assert some kind of backstage manipulations by the RNC—dream on!—and will attempt to undermine the spontaneous, disorganized, refreshingly unruly nature of the protests, all in the service of protecting the Self-object.

We'll probably hear the word "racism" a lot, too, as the Self continues its freak-out. Fox News, racism, gun-clingers—it's going to be Scapegoat Autumn for our friends in the Self, and the best strategy for those of us on the outside of the psychodrama is to smile blandly, avoid eye contact, and walk quickly along. Do not engage, as they say in mental hospitals.

The good news: A lot of the freak-out will take place inside the Self itself, as it were. The Obama administration is going to go through an autumn of shake-ups

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and reorganizations and thinly veiled backbiting in the press. It will be cast as a reboot, the sign of a man in charge. "After Shaky Start, Obama Takes a Sharper, Realistic New Tack" will be one of the (many) headlines the *New York Self-Times* will print, desperately clinging to its beloved Self-object, but also acknowledging in its subconscious that the particular Self-object may not be working out. It may need to be demoted, in the ruthless way our subconscious self-preserves, to somewhere less important—say, between the rainy vacation and the hot dog. We'll start hearing, then, about the whole concept of the presidency itself. Maybe it's too much for one man. Maybe this is too ungovernable a country. Maybe the voters are too fickle. "A Not-So-Modest Proposal: A Serious Argument for a Parliamentary System" will be an article published by someone, somewhere, at some point during the dismal Obama popularity slide.

Sounds fun, doesn't it? And richly deserved. Almost makes one excited about the prospects of a conservative revival.

Almost. Because the Left isn't the only side with a personality disorder. The Right, too, has problems in the sanity department. For the past eight years, we developed a rather serious case of false object-permanence.

Infants, famously, have no sense of the permanence of the things around them—if they don't see it in front of them, it doesn't exist. Hold an object in front of a baby, make him smile, then quickly put the object behind your back, and to the baby it's "Hey! That thing I smiled at doesn't exist anymore!" Which brings tears and a sense of loss and a lot of other terrible things that can be worked out only later, during expensive therapy in which you, the parent, emerge as the chief and only villain.

At a certain point, though, the baby develops a sense of object-permanence, and when you hide the object behind your back, suddenly it's "Hey! Stop withholding that object I want! It's behind your back, you cruel and unloving God-giant!" Which brings tears and a sense of paranoia and a lot of other terrible things that can be worked out only later, during expensive therapy in which you, the parent, emerge as the chief and only villain.

Object-permanence, like the relationship to the Self-object, can be a good thing. It can also, in extreme cases, be a bad thing. You can start to think that something's there when it's not.

For almost eight years, we conservatives had a hyperactive sense of object-permanence. We thought that even though there was *no* evidence of conservative, small-government values in the Republican-led Congress (or the White House, for that matter), those values still existed somewhere, behind someone's back. It turned out, as the economy collapsed and the banks were essentially nationalized and the government bailed out everything in sight, that when you can't see free-market conservatism *right there in front of your face at all times*, it ain't there.

On the right, we suffer from an infantile disorder. On the left, they're victims of a malignant narcissism.

We're quite a pair. **NR**

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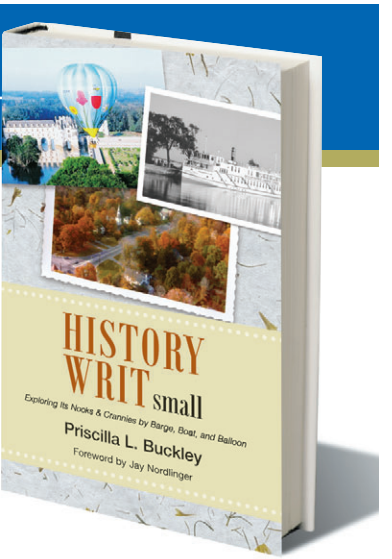
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Priscilla L. Buckley
Foreword by Jay Nordlinger

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> Michel calls to the crowd that has gathered. "*Alors!* We need your help!" And soon, a dozen or more people are pulling on the ropes. And they bring us to a halt three feet from the barbed wire fence that marks the end of the field. The four Atkinsons get out at Michel's order, but Jane and I remain aboard as ballast. A blast from the burner, and we lift a bit, away from the dangerous fence. Another two blasts, and we are safe. The balloon pulls the basket over—a layover, they call it—and Jane and I, flat on our backs for a moment, find slithering out on the whole easier than climbing out, if less dignified. Michel kisses the ladies on both cheeks, *comme ci*, right cheek, *comme ça*, left cheek, and shakes Jack's and young Greg's hands. We've covered an estimated 25 kilometers in just over two hours—*Santé!* everyone.
>
> And so the flights go, each different. We might have Buddy playing games—brushing through the treetops, putting down on the still waters of a lake or pond—or Michel swooping low over a village and calling out to a family having its summer dinner in the garden: "*Bon appétit!*" or, "*La belle brune!*" in salute to the handsome mother of the family. Children in pyjamas, waving from attic windows: "Where are you going?" they call, and Jane calls back, "Wherever the wind takes us." "Come back," they plead, but come back we cannot. The wind says no.

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The Gambler

Barney Frank doesn't know when to hold 'em, or even the name of the game being played

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

Barney Frank doesn't gamble with his own money. The man has his vices, but that's not one of them. On the other hand, he doesn't mind if you gamble with your own money—he is working to overturn restrictions on Internet gambling—and, more to the point, he's more than happy to gamble with your money. "I want to roll the dice a little bit more in this situation towards subsidized housing," is what Frank said in September 2003 when he was warned about the possibility that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were precipitating a subprime-mortgage crisis that presented a systemic risk to global finance. "I do not want the same kind of focus on safety and soundness that we have in OCC [the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency] and OTS [the Office of Thrift Supervision]." As it turns out, an overzealous "focus on safety and soundness" was not among the problems to be found in the two book-cooking, bonus-padding, dodgy-debt-dealing government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs) that had come to dominate the American mortgage industry.

Now chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, Frank has a hand in everything from mortgage lending to Internet poker to insurance to the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). He's a true believer in government's using a heavy hand in housing and banking, but, while working his way up through the committee, Frank was careful to play both sides of the banking game. He can deliver jeremiads denouncing the greed and excess of Wall Street on the macro scale, but on the micro scale, he's been careful to offer favors and deal-sweeteners to the institutions immediately answerable to the laws his committee writes—a classic carrot-and-stick regulator.

For example, Frank threatened to use his seat on the Financial Services Committee to punish a Boston-based banking group that wasn't making enough subprime loans to suit him, back when subprime loans were fashionable. But his work in behalf of Internet gambling is a favor more to the bankers than to the offshore casino operators—it would have cost U.S. banks hundreds of millions of dollars to monitor gambling transactions, and they've lobbied hard against the law. Liberalizing Internet gambling won't cost Frank anything and will spare the banks hundreds of millions in expenses. The tangential politics of gambling are pretty sweet for Frank, too: "It's a wedge issue for the Republican party," he explained. "It puts the Republicans in a bind between hardened conservatives and another strong group

DARREN GYGI

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of theirs. If you look at people who say keep the government out of my business, say don't interfere with my personal freedom, don't over-regulate business, and let's have freedom on the Internet, this bill is the worst example of a violation of all of those." That's how Frank does business on the Financial Services Committee, ignoring the big picture in exchange for a steady stream of tangible benefits—a little money for a low-income project here, a campaign donation there.

BARNEY FRANK, in his own words, likes to roll the dice. The problem is that when it came to subprime mortgages, he was betting the stability of the world financial system on those dice, and the dice came up snake eyes. It's not as though Frank & Co. hadn't been warned—and not just by market fundamentalists and Republican partisans. When he talked about rolling the dice, Frank was responding in part to the concerns raised by Greg Mankiw, a Harvard professor and one of the most influential economists of his generation, who at the time was serving as chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Bush administration. Mankiw argued that the GSEs' lines of credit with the federal government, while mostly symbolic, gave the impression that Washington was backstopping these privately owned businesses. This was obviously unfair, as Mankiw saw; more important, it was dangerous. How high were the stakes? Trillions of dollars later, now we know.

Mankiw wasn't speaking econo-gobbledygook. He spelled out the situation in language that even a congressman can understand: "This situation raises concerns over fairness, but in my view, the larger issue for the policymaking and regulatory community is that the subsidy creates a source of systemic risk for our financial system," Mankiw said in a November 2003 speech. "This risk arises because the subsidy has allowed the GSEs to become gigantic. From 1995 to 2002, the debt issued by the housing GSEs more than tripled. As of the end of 2002, their total reported debt was $2.2 trillion. To put this in perspective, the privately held debt of the federal government is $3.2 trillion. If recent trends continue, GSE debt will soon exceed the privately held debt of the federal government. The GSEs have used the proceeds from issuing debt to amass enormous portfolios of mortgages and mortgage-backed securities. For example, according to data from Fannie Mae, Fannie and Freddie held more than one-quarter of all outstanding mortgage-related securities as of the end of 2002. As a result, Fannie and Freddie now have major interests outside the business of securitizing mortgages. They are now also in the asset-management business, with their financial health depending heavily on the performance of these portfolios of mortgage-backed securities." Mankiw did everything short of drawing Congress a map with a legend reading, "Here be monster debt."

But Barney Frank was having none of it. He'd been a powerful voice against reform of the GSEs back in 1992, when he had helped hobble Rep. Jim Leach's move to create a strong regulator for Fannie and Freddie. Instead, they got the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight (OFHEO), a weak regulator—but not weak enough for Frank's tastes: When OFHEO warned in 2004 that there were problems at the GSEs, Frank joined up with those masters of finance Maxine Waters and Lacy Clay in hearings at which OFHEO was accused of attempting "the political lynching" of Fannie Mae CEO Franklin Raines, who is black—and who was paid nearly $100 million as he ran his GSE into the ground. Imputations of racism have long been a standard part of the arsenal used to beat mortgage bankers into political submission and have regularly been deployed against critics of Fannie and Freddie. The same ugly politics derailed a 2000 reform effort led by Rep. Richard Baker (R., La.), again with Frank serving as the anchor of a largely unified Democratic opposition. At the time, Frank was positively contemptuous of the notion that taxpayers might end up on the hook for Fannie/Freddie excesses, declaring that there was "no federal liability there whatsoever." Actual federal liability: $100 billion and rising, and some analysts expect it to top $200 billion. The total cost, which must include the subprime bubble's damage to the broader economy, is probably incalculable, but easily in the trillions of dollars. Put another way, the subprime meltdown and its aftermath will end up costing the United States more than World War II did. Roll the dice? This is a little bit more than a lost weekend in Vegas.

Particularly cynical was Frank's opposition to a reform package in the 109th Congress, another Baker-led effort. Rep. Tom DeLay attached a provision that would have prohibited certain nonprofit groups from receiving federal affordable-housing funds. The obvious intent was to keep taxpayers' dollars out of the hands of the likes of ACORN and other left-wing "community organizing" outfits. Frank, in a show of brazen chutzpah, painted this move as an attack on the Catholic Church and voted against the bill. He put out statements that DeLay's amendment would exclude "the Catholic Church's housing arm," thereby undermining programs that are "an important source of affordable housing, particularly for seniors." Frank's tender concerns for the Catholic social mission have been notably narrow—see, for instance, his indifference to his home state's ugly shutdown of Catholic adoption services—but he is quite tight with an outfit called the Union Neighborhood Assistance Corp., a Boston-based affordable-housing lobby that has helped to arrange billions of dollars in housing loans and once was accused by the Fleet banking group of extortion. But Fleet wasn't up against just a bunch of lefty rabble-rousers—it was up against Frank, a powerful member of the banking committee, too. So Fleet gave in, ultimately, setting up an $8.5 billion program for low-income/subprime borrowers. Frank leaned hard on the bank, complaining to Fleet that he'd had "dozens" of constituents complain to him about its practices. Frank had earlier threatened to hold up Fleet's merger with BankBoston until he was satisfied that the bank was writing enough mortgages in poor neighborhoods—which is to say, largely subprime mortgages. It wasn't just the much-lamented Community Reinvestment Act that was warping banks' lending practices.

FRANK now protests that he and fellow Democrats were in fact reform-minded but, being in the minority, were powerless to do anything. The historical record simply does not bear out his claims. Especially notable is that in 2003, when it already was clear that the GSEs' managements (particularly that of Freddie Mac) were less than scrupulously honest and that all the wobbly debt on their books threatened to become a millstone around the neck of the world economy, Frank still opposed real reform. Specifically, the Bush administration proposed giving the Treasury Department the power to supervise the GSEs and to set new capital-reserve requirements for them—a power that, at the time, was held by Congress. An independent auditor already had concluded that Freddie Mac had engaged in multibillion-dollar

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accounting chicanery in order to boost executives' bonuses, while other analysts were concerned that neither of the firms could withstand a serious rise in interest rates or mortgage defaults. The *New York Times* called the Bush-administration proposal a plan for "the most significant regulatory overhaul in the housing finance industry since the savings and loan crisis a decade ago." Frank's response was pure denial: "These two entities—Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—are not facing any kind of financial crisis," he told the *Times*. "The more people exaggerate these problems, the more pressure there is on these companies, the less we will see in terms of affordable housing." The problems were real, contrary to Frank's misdiagnosis. And housing is suddenly a lot more affordable than it was, too.

Each of the significant reform pushes—1992, 2000, and 2003—saw vehement Democratic opposition, with Frank front and center. Reformers were accused of catering to the GSEs' critics on Wall Street at the expense of the poor—except when Republicans were being too soft on the poor: Incredibly, after spending eight years denouncing them as mindless tools of the rich, Frank now argues that it was George W. Bush and his administration who "pushed home ownership for very poor people." From patrician plutocrats to tribunes of the plebs in nothing flat—how the mighty fall!

The GSEs, and the financial system at large, still are in need of real reform. They remain in the dangerous position of being nominally private and profit-oriented enterprises with lines of credit at the Treasury and the backing of the federal government. But they are such a rich source of capital for politicians and their projects that there is no appetite for really reforming them—or, as should have been done years ago, truly cutting them loose from the federal apron strings.

So it's not clear that Frank and his fellow Democrats have learned the lesson of the subprime meltdown. Frank still gets excited about executive-pay caps and other populist issues—for a while, he and Tim Geithner were talking about trying to force TARP's compensation rules onto every U.S. financial-services company, and possibly onto non-financial companies, too, regardless of whether they'd taken TARP funds. Prior to the collapse, Frank's main criticism of Fannie and Freddie was that they had awarded huge bonuses, which he lamented even while declaring that "Fannie and Freddie are fundamentally sound" and that "they are not in danger of going under." Barney Frank isn't stupid, but he may believe that his constituents are: Ritual denunciations of the rich make angry progressives smile through the tears of rage, and the mad salary-cap talk doesn't worry too many people on the Hill, since nobody thinks such proposals have a serious chance of ever being enacted. So Frank and the Democrats still frame the issue as their championing the poor against the rich bankers. In truth, it's been the opposite: A lot of well-connected Washingtonians and Wall Streeters got rich off of Fannie and Freddie, and taxpayers, including poor taxpayers, got stuck with the bill.

And they especially got stuck with bills belonging to friends of Barney Frank. Under the original TARP provisions, for instance, cash injections were supposed to go to banks that were relatively healthy. But the implosion of Fannie and Freddie shares delivered a crippling blow to the capital of OneUnited, a Boston-based bank that had long maintained a friendly relationship with Frank—and with Maxine Waters, whose husband had been on its board of directors until 2008. So Frank had TARP rewritten in committee, inserting provisions designed to channel millions of dollars in relief specifically to OneUnited. Frank then spoke to federal regulators on behalf of OneUnited, in order to make sure that the message was received. He told them it would be a "social tragedy" if the minority-owned bank were to be wiped out by its bad investments. The taxpayers' cash was duly dispensed, and OneUnited was last heard from haggling with federal regulators over whether it had acted improperly in buying a Porsche for the use of its executives. Greed is good for Friends of Barney.

So, why Barney Frank? Why did he end up being the face of everything the Democrats did wrong leading up to the subprime meltdown? He is not a fool, and even among his enemies nobody argues that he's on the take. But what was going on at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac was scandalous—scandalous in a big, extravagant, ugly way. The weird thing about Barney Frank—one of the weird things about Barney Frank—is that he's basically immunized against scandal. He's like one of those medieval doctors who got so deep into plague country that nothing could touch them. It's hard to think of another congressman who would have survived the revelation that he had had recourse to a prostitute, had taken the prostitute into his home, had hired the prostitute as a congressional aide, had written letters to probation officers in the prostitute's behalf on congressional letterhead, and had had a gay whorehouse run out of his Capitol Hill home, with the whole circus coming to an ugly public climax when the prostitute, inspired by a viewing of *Mayflower Madam*, tried to sell his story to the *Washington Post*.

For a normal politician, that's the sort of scandal that keeps your great-grandkids out of politics. But Representative Frank was one of two openly gay members of Congress at the time, and, strangely enough, his homosexuality muffled the scandal rather than amplifying it, probably a consequence of the 1980s assumption that gay men were more or less uniformly promiscuous—the soft homophobia of low expectations. Frank not only weathered the scandal, he turned around and won his next election with 66 percent of the vote, and nobody has come close to touching him since.

For the general public, the hustlers at Fannie and Freddie are a far bigger problem than was the one in Frank's bedroom—but their hustle was hard for most homeowners to understand. Prostitution is universally familiar; high finance is arcane, with instruments so complex that the specialists who trade them often fail to truly comprehend them. If Barney Frank wasn't going to get run out of office over something as straightforward as a prostitution scandal, he sure wasn't going to get into much trouble for being insufficiently hawkish on the debt-to-capital ratio at Fannie Mae. Within a few years of the prostitution revelations, Frank was so inoculated against scandal that he could carry on his Fannie Mae shenanigans while he was romantically involved with a high-ranking Fannie official. Frank's longtime beau, Herb Moses, was known to introduce himself as the sole member of the congressional gay spouses' caucus, which led to accusations that Frank suffered from a deep conflict of interest.

Frank is acid-tongued, self-righteous, and generally unbearable, but even his harshest critics don't think he's a crook—he's mostly a true believer when it comes to federal intervention in the housing market, and as such he has provided convenient cover and a congressional cat's-paw to the rogue's gallery of

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self-dealing, crooked, and cracked miscreants who rode the Fannie/Freddie gravy train.

There are rules for gamblers, Kenny Rogers's famous formulation—"Know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em"—being the most famous and tunesome. But there is a more fundamental rule for gamblers, a First Commandment, and the failure to heed it is the cardinal sin among gentlemen of chance: Know what game you're playing. Representative Frank thought the game was about housing. It wasn't. It was about the bond market, and Fannie/Freddie's crackpot plan to dominate it.

'I USED to think that, if there was reincarnation, I wanted to come back as the president or the pope or as a .400 baseball hitter," Clinton henchman James Carville once said. "But now I would like to come back as the bond market. You can intimidate everybody." There's a lot to be gleaned from that statement beyond the fact that James Carville should never have been allowed anywhere near the levers of power. The bond market does what voters and their representatives cannot: It punishes governments for financial buffoonery, and it often does so swiftly and ruthlessly.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac thought they had a shot at becoming the bond market. It was not long ago that the U.S. government was expected to be running surpluses, or near-surpluses, for the indefinite future. The folks at Fannie and Freddie calculated that this meant that Washington was going to be selling fewer Treasury bonds than it had been, and that the GSEs' bonds, with their implicit federal backing, would be able to fill the void, in effect displacing Treasuries as the new benchmark for the bond market. Issuing the benchmark bond, the GSEs would be able to borrow at the "risk free" rate, i.e. what the U.S. government pays to borrow. With a line of credit at the Treasury, the implicit backing of Uncle Sam, and the power that comes from issuing the benchmark in the all-powerful bond market, the GSEs—privately owned corporations, bear in mind—would have enjoyed a combination of political and economic power normally reserved for entities that have armies and navies. Fannie and Freddie were so sure that they'd end up stealing Treasuries' pride of place that they trademarked the name "Benchmark Bonds" and began issuing them.

"You have to go back to mid-2004 or so," says one longtime GSE watcher. "They were really flying high, especially that 2004-to-2007 run. What they were after, trying to become the new benchmark bond, would have made them untouchable. Congress wouldn't dare try to regulate them."

Of course, it didn't work out quite like that. Federal deficits returned, and with them a flood of Treasury bonds. And the market for Fannie and Freddie paper isn't what it used to be. But Congress still doesn't dare try to really reform them. Fannie and Freddie still are limping on, zombies in search of new victims. As usual, the victims are us: James Lockhart, director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, Fannie and Freddie's regulator, in late July announced the bad news in classic finance-speak: "Some assets and senior preferreds will have to be left behind as they come out of conservatorship, and that means some of those losses will never be repaid." In English, that means: They aren't going to pay us back, at least not all of what they owe us. We bet on deadbeats, and we lost. But Representative Frank is still at the table, dice in hand, feeling lucky, and it's still anybody's guess whether he's figured out what game is being played on him, and on us. NR

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Sarah STUDIES

Gubernatorial Candidate Palin can teach the GOP a lot about how to win elections

BY BRADLEY A. SMITH

Now that Sarah Palin has left the governorship of Alaska, Republicans should learn what they can from her political career. And for all Palin's ups and downs, the lesson her career offers is how to win elections.

You wouldn't know that from what's happened lately. A *Wall Street Journal* poll taken just after Palin announced her resignation found that 43 percent of Republicans and 46 percent of self-identified conservatives don't want her to run for president. A Battleground poll shows her favorable/unfavorable rating at –5. Even for many Republicans, "Palinism" has taken on a negative connotation.

Yet it wasn't that way last August 29, when John McCain introduced Palin to the nation. McCain's surprise selection of the Alaska governor as his running mate electrified leaders across the GOP political spectrum, from social conservatives to budget hawks to libertarians. At home in Alaska, Palin also enjoyed overwhelming approval from independents and even Democrats (at the time of her selection, various polls showed her approval rating in Alaska in the upper 70s and 80s). The Sarah Palin who won her state's admiration was quite different from the Sarah Palin whom most Americans saw, or saw caricatured, in last year's presidential race. It is the Sarah Palin who ran for governor in 2006, not the Sarah Palin who ran for vice president in 2008, who can teach Republicans how to win elections again.

In a brief announcement, described by local reporters as "upbeat," declaring her candidacy for governor in October 2005, Palin stated her reasons for running: "I want an efficient, accountable government to provide basic services. It's really a pretty simple philosophy and it's one I believe is shared by the majority of Alaskans—most of whom are instilled with a sweet streak of independence. Alaskans deserve transparency at the highest level of government."

Since she started with low statewide name recognition, Palin's first ad in the 2006 campaign was called "Meet the Sarah Palin family." It was built around shots of a casually attired Palin speaking outside her lakefront home, interspersed with shots of her attractive family. The text is worth quoting in full:

> I'm Sarah Palin, and I believe the best is yet to come for Alaska. I'm running for governor because I want to deliver the best to Alaskans now, not later. I'll put new energy into a gas line contract that puts Alaska first, and puts Alaskans to work with fiscal responsibility. We'll forward-fund education and build an infrastructure for progress and opportunity. Alaska has a lot riding on this election, including the trust of future generations. We won't let them down.

The ad is low on specifics, but as an introduction to the candidate, it works. Palin looks great, and quintessentially Alaskan. The themes are put into place—energy, fiscal responsibility, education, roads. These things have particular appeal to Alaska's suburban middle class, centered in the fast-growing Mat-Su valley, where Palin was mayor of Wasilla. They are centrist, dinner-table issues—not the culture-war issues with which some voters would come to associate her national presence.

Palin's later ads expanded on these themes, emphasizing "lower . . . tax rates and increased services." Typical footage included shots of Palin meeting informally with constituents and working in her office, but also of road construction, to emphasize the infrastructure theme. Palin's ads ended with the candidate giving a little twist to the usual "disclaimer," saying, "I'm Sarah Palin and this ad is frugally paid for by Palin for Governor."

In addition to these bread-and-butter issues, Palin seized on two related matters of distinct and immediate importance to Alaska—construction of a long-delayed gas pipeline from the North Slope, and corruption in government. Thus one ad, "Take a Stand," featured Palin discussing ethics, transparency, and open government—reinforcing the image she had achieved by resigning from the state's Oil and Gas Commission in protest of government corruption.

Similarly, "Pipeline," the campaign's most issue-oriented television ad, showed Palin in front of a gas fire in her home, taking a break from reading to her daughter Piper to address the camera. Palin notes that "it's time to bring gas from the Slope to heat our homes and fuel our economy. It's good business to open gas-line negotiations to all viable parties. We need to put new energy into these negotiations—[looking down at Piper] to secure our future. We need to put Alaskans first."

It is a masterly ad, criticizing by implication the incumbent governor, Frank Murkowski, who had negotiated a poor pipeline deal without an open bid process, as well as the state's entire old-boy network. (Palin would defeat Murkowski, along with a businessman named John Binkley, in the Republican primary.) And its opening image emphasizes another campaign theme—education. The ad is upbeat and focuses not on resentments but on a positive future.

Palin's ads—like most 30-second spots—were short on specifics, but the issues, direction, and theme were clear. What Alaska voters saw was a message of frugal, competent, honest government, with an emphasis on dealing with the gas-line and energy issues. There is no culture war, no negativity, no class resentment. Says Michael Carey, a columnist for the *Anchorage Daily News* who covered the campaign extensively: "The message was, 'You'll get the basics, and it will be better. I'm not in the game to raise your taxes.'"

Mr. Smith is the Josiah H. Blackmore II/Shirley M. Nault Designated Professor of Law at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, and the chairman of the Center for Competitive Politics.

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PALIN'S approach to campaign debates was much the same. In more than a dozen debates spanning the primary and general-election campaigns, Palin stayed resolutely focused on the kitchen-table issues while parrying the attempts of liberal journalist/moderators to paint her into a corner on social issues in libertarian Alaska. The most important televised debate came one week before the election, with the race too close to call. Reviewing a tape of that debate reveals a candidate who is knowledgeable and relaxed, and stays true to her beliefs while maintaining a moderate tone throughout.

Just minutes into the debate with Democrat Tony Knowles (Murkowski's predecessor as governor, who served from 1994 to 2002) and independent Andrew Halcro, she is asked how she would respond to a recent court order that Alaska's government must provide health benefits for same-sex partners of state employees. (Murkowski had responded to the order by calling a special legislative session to amend the state constitution.) Palin replies, "You would have to just do it" (i.e., provide the benefits). Then she notes that in 1998 Alaska voters approved a constitutional amendment that defined marriage to include only opposite-sex couples, and expresses her belief that the voters meant that amendment to cover benefits as well. Thus she says that, while following the court ruling, she would give voters an opportunity to "clarify" the 1998 amendment. This answer is intelligent and respectful of voters and gay couples, and—not bad politics—it pushes the issue back to the voters.

The debate then turns to abortion. Palin had avoided raising the subject during both the primary and the general-election campaigns: A Nexis search of all stories including the words "abortion" and "Palin" in 2006 finds not a single reference to Palin's discussing abortion, except in response to direct inquiries—and then, as in the debates, she is brief and sympathetic. Following one attempt by Knowles to force the issue, the *Anchorage Daily News* summarized Palin's response as: "It's divisive of the Knowles camp to resurrect an issue that's really for the U.S. Supreme Court to decide, not the governor of Alaska."

In the debate, a reporter asks Palin whether she would support a constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion. Her answer is frank but not zealous: "I would. It's no secret that I'm pro-life, and I don't hide that, nor am I ashamed of that, so a proposal like that, I would stand by it." Following up, another reporter asks: If a woman became pregnant as a result of a rape, "would that be an instance where you would allow her to have an abortion?" Palin responds, "I don't think it would be up to me as an individual to allow."

This is a perfectly reasonable answer that sends a message that the campaign is not about divisive issues over which the governor has no control, but of course the reporter pushes: "Would you make it against the law?" Palin briefly states that abortion is acceptable only when the life of the mother is in danger. The reporter insists on a specific answer to the rape question. Palin gives a modulated reply: "With my respect for the sanctity of life, and my belief in the potential of life—I know that this aspect of the abortion issue is very sensitive, and is a very private matter also—but, personally, I would choose life."

But the reporter is not done: "If your daughter were pregnant, or your son were involved in a pregnancy before marriage, what would be your reaction and advice to him or her?" And Palin gently slams him: "Again, I would choose life, and [with a small smile] I'm quite confident that you're going to be asking my opponents about those same scenarios." "Again, if your daughter had been raped . . . ?" Palin responds simply, "Again, I would choose life."

In Wasilla

AL GRILLO/AP

Today, many Republican critics of Palin argue that the party's tone, as much as the substance of its policy commitments, has harmed its reputation among independents, moderates, and college-educated voters. Palin's 2006 debate performance on abortion is a classic blending of tone and substance. She does not retreat from her position; she handles a series of ultimately insulting questions with dignity; she recognizes the complexity of the issue, and the fact that the governor's role is limited in any case; and she is respectful of those with other views and those facing a difficult choice. Her framing of her position—"I would choose life"—is positive rather than critical. You know where she stands, even as she makes clear that her campaign is not about culture wars. It is nothing less than a model for pro-life Republicans answering similar questions.

Later in the debate, Palin answered a question about assisted suicide by saying, "This is a very personal and private issue, and I do respect others' opinions on this, but I do not think the government should sanction ending life." Asked about stem-cell research at Alaska universities, she again briefly reaffirms her strong (some would say "extreme") pro-life position while pointing out that the question is hypothetical, as state universities were not doing stem-cell research. The message to those who may disagree is that that disagreement is not a reason to vote for her opponent if they like other elements of her platform.

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Having parried the various "social" questions, Palin radiates energy when the subject turns to education. She urges more vocational education to help deal with Alaska's serious dropout problem. She speaks intelligently and in detail on indigenous hunting and fishing rights, and is the only candidate to express reservations about whether the state can be an impartial regulator if it takes an ownership position in the pipeline. She comes across in that exchange as much more realistic than her opponents. While low taxes and spending are a clear theme as the debate moves on, she is not dogmatic—she calls for pay raises to retain officers in the state's Village Public Safety Officer program, which polices Alaska's many small, remote villages, and for more spending on roads and on rural water and sewer infrastructure.

THESE themes of competence, transparency, low taxes, and frugal government dominated the campaign. Several longtime Alaska political observers I spoke to used the word "pragmatic" to describe the Sarah Palin who won election in 2006 and governed over the next year and a half. The *Anchorage Daily News* reported in early August of 2006 that "social issues" had so far played almost no role in the campaign. It also noted that Palin opposed legalization of marijuana but believed the state should focus its enforcement efforts on other drugs.

With polls showing that most Alaskans are pro-choice, Palin's opponents did their best to make it a "culture war" election. Knowles mailed thousands of cards to pro-choice voters, quoting Palin's statement to a pro-life group in 2002 that she was "as pro-life as a candidate can be." But her nuanced answers and gentle tone foiled her opponents, locking up the pro-life vote while gaining respect and votes from both moderate and pro-choice voters. On other social issues, she told the *Anchorage Daily News* that she saw no need for increased funding for faith-based initiatives, and that she supported and would sign a bill establishing the death penalty for adults who murder children.

Palin took a similarly moderate course on the environment. Asked by the *Anchorage Daily News* about the role of state government in addressing climate change, she did not deny that climate change is occurring, but made the sensible observation that "we need to analyze the potential economic costs, needs and opportunities associated with climate change. Let's be cautious in how we react—to make sure we don't overreact." She added that "the Alaska Climate Impact Assessment Commission is supposed to assess the situation and issue a report on March 1, 2007. This is a good start." Call it a dodge if you want; to others, it was a smart, skeptical answer.

The Sarah Palin who won Alaska's governorship in 2006 came perhaps as close as any Republican in recent memory to recapturing the Reagan formula. She never wavered in or ran from her conservative positions on social issues, but she addressed them with understanding, compassion, and respect for opposing views. Like Reagan, she emphasized competence, economic issues, taxes, and frugality, and, again like Reagan, her instincts on taxes and spending were libertarian and deregulatory, though not dogmatically so.

She added to this social conservatism and political libertarianism a Reaganesque dose of populism, spotting symbolic issues (such as pledging to sell the state government's jet) and exploiting an attractive, folksy public persona. Her approach was inclusive, seeking the support of moderates, independents, and Democrats, and it worked. Though substantially outspent in both the primary and the general election, she took out two former governors to become the first woman and the youngest governor in state history.

The point here is not that GOP candidates should always avoid discussing social issues, or that the GOP needs to embrace same-sex marriage or drop support for gun rights, or that it should not oppose tax increases or spending programs. Rather, it is that bread-and-butter issues—taxes, spending, competence, economic growth—are likely to dominate most elections for the next few years at least, and while Republicans can address these issues (and retain strong, even "extreme" positions), they should modulate their tone, as Sarah Palin did, to appeal to a broad cross-section of voters. Pro-life and values voters are a crucial part of the GOP coalition, but to win national majorities, the Republican party must capture the votes of upper-middle-class suburbanites, as Palin did. And while Palin's signature pipeline issue and anti-corruption theme may have been specific to Alaska, they point to the need for Republicans to identify and focus on local issues.

The Sarah Palin who won Alaska's governorship in 2006 came perhaps as close as any Republican in recent memory to recapturing the Reagan formula.

After winning, Palin governed much as she had campaigned. She was not a culture warrior, and even vetoed a bill to prohibit same-sex partner benefits for state employees on the grounds that it violated the state constitution. She angered pro-life advocates by refusing to include pro-life legislation in the agenda for a 2008 special session of the legislature, saying that the bills would have been a distraction from completing work on the gas-pipeline deal. In what the *Anchorage Daily News* said "may be the biggest single-year line-item veto total in state history," Palin killed a host of pork-barrel spending projects. She supported school choice and home schooling. She argued for market solutions to health-care issues, but signed a law relaxing eligibility standards for the state's S-CHIP program. She lowered property taxes.

There is a reason Palin had such high approval ratings 20 months into her governorship: She combined a conservative/libertarian core ideology with a pragmatism that made her a flexible, non-divisive governor. If Republicans want to return to majority-party status, they can learn some valuable lessons from that Sarah Palin. **NR**

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FIVE DECADES OF Crisis

The persistent, alarming link between illegitimacy and poverty

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

SOMETIMES, a crisis lasts so long, or proves so impervious to remedy, that it becomes normal. We are now 44 years removed from Daniel Patrick Moynihan's famous Labor Department report on how family disintegration was stifling black progress. Moynihan expressed alarm that, in 1963, 23.6 percent of African-American births were to unmarried women, compared with 16.8 percent in 1940. He called for "a national effort" to stabilize black families. In a way, Moynihan was the Paul Revere of the nonmarital-birth crisis; yet at the time of its release (1965), his report sparked a huge controversy and drew accusations of racism. Over the ensuing decades, policymakers have been reluctant to address out-of-wedlock births—even as the problem has gotten much, much worse.

How bad is it? In 2007, nearly 40 percent of all births in the United States were outside marriage, compared with 34 percent in 2002 and 18.4 percent in 1980. That's according to the latest National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data, which were released earlier this year. "All measures of childbearing by unmarried women rose to historic levels in 2007," the NCHS reports. Nonmarital births represented 27.8 percent of non-Hispanic white births, 51.3 percent of Hispanic births, and a staggering 71.6 percent of non-Hispanic black births. Though we can take small comfort from the long-term decline in nonmarital births among teenagers, the nonmarital birthrate among older teens (ages 18–19) has recently ticked upward. Meanwhile, birthrates among unmarried women in their 20s and early 30s have been soaring. Teenagers accounted for 50 percent of all nonmarital births in 1970 but only 23 percent in 2007. By comparison, women in their 20s accounted for 42 percent of all nonmarital births in 1970 and 60 percent in 2007.

Perhaps the most disturbing trend is among Hispanics, who remain America's "largest and fastest-growing minority group," according to the Census Bureau. In 1980, only 23.6 percent of Hispanic births in the United States were to unmarried women. By 1990, that figure had reached 36.7 percent. By 2000, it had reached 42.7 percent. In 2006, 49.9 percent of Hispanic births were outside marriage. A year later, for the first time ever, more than half were. The Pew Hispanic Center says that "69 percent of first-generation Latino children live in married-couple families, compared with 73 percent of second-generation children and just 52 percent in the third generation or higher." This suggests that many Hispanic immigrants are assimilating into an underclass culture—the type of culture that has long hampered the mobility of America's urban poor.

IN contemporary America, nonmarital births are inextricably tied to broader socioeconomic divisions. "In 2007," write Brookings Institution scholars Ron Haskins and Isabel Sawhill in their new book, *Creating an Opportunity Society*, "the least educated women were six times as likely as the most educated women to have a baby outside marriage." American Enterprise Institute social scientist Charles Murray has been crunching the numbers to illustrate how nonmarital childbearing among whites varies by income group. His preliminary findings indicate that the proportion of nonmarital births among the white underclass is likely "in the region of 70 percent," while among the white working class it "may be above 40 percent." Among middle-class whites, the ratio "is approaching 20 percent." As for the highest earners, the white overclass, "their ratio is probably about 4 or 5 percent, tops."

Such disparities are fueling a sharp divergence in family environments and exacerbating inequality. University of Chicago economist James Heckman puts it bluntly: "American society is polarizing." The children of more-educated women are growing up in much better family environments than the children of less-educated women, with "the quality of *parenting*" being "the important scarce resource" in disadvantaged households. Heckman reckons that "about 50 percent of the variance in inequality in lifetime earnings is determined by age 18." Furthermore, "most of the gaps at age 18 that help to explain gaps in adult outcomes are present at age five." This suggests that the family resources and attention devoted to a child during his or her earliest years are crucial—which, in turn, means that children from stable two-parent marriages "appear to be at a major advantage compared to children from other unions."

Unfortunately, as sociologist Paul Amato of Penn State and economist Rebecca Maynard of the University of Pennsylvania have noted, the share of American children living with married parents dropped from 85.2 percent in 1970 to 67.8 percent in 2000. Absent this change, Amato and Maynard calculate that the child-poverty rate in 2000 would have been 26 percent lower (11.6 percent, as opposed to 15.6 percent). In his 2008 Father's Day remarks at Chicago's Apostolic Church of God, Barack Obama observed that "children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime, nine times more likely to drop out of schools, and 20 times more likely to end up in prison."

All of this is worth remembering whenever you hear a politician lament the uneven distribution of America's economic pie. In the mid-1990s, Urban Institute economist Robert Lerman published an exhaustive analysis of how changes in family structure between 1971 and 1989 had affected income inequality and child poverty. "On the basis of projections of simulated marriages and marriage-induced earnings effects," he estimated that the decline in marriage rates over that period "accounted for nearly half the increase in income inequality and more than the entire rise in child poverty rates." The impact on African-American kids was especially harsh. As Lerman explained, the portion of black children living below the poverty line grew from 40.5 percent in 1971 to 43.3 percent in 1989; but if black marriage patterns had stayed constant from 1971 onward and spurred the customary growth in family incomes, the black child-poverty rate in 1989 would have been only 29.1 percent. In other words, "one-third of poor black children would have escaped poverty."

A related study by sociologists David Eggebeen of Penn State and Daniel Lichter of Cornell found that if black family composition had remained consistent from 1960 to 1988, the black child-

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poverty rate in 1988 would have been 17.2 percentage points lower. More recently, Sawhill and her Brookings colleague Adam Thomas concluded that if marriage patterns had held steady at 1970 levels, the overall child-poverty rate in 1998 would have been 4.4 percentage points lower. Subsequent research by Sawhill and Haskins determined that "the poverty rate among families with children could be lowered by 71 percent if the poor completed high school, worked full-time, married, and had no more than two children."

In their new book, Sawhill and Haskins point out that the poverty rate among married-couple families is about five times *lower* than it is among female-headed families with children. "The growth of single-parent families and smaller households along with the increased tendency for high earners to marry each other can explain roughly half of the increase in inequality between 1979 and 2004," they write. "The remainder is the result of rising wage inequality." (Perhaps the best examination of rising wage inequality can be found in *The Race Between Education and Technology*, a 2008 book by Harvard economists Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz, who demonstrate how the combined effect of "skill-biased technological change" and "a sharp *decrease* in the growth rate of the relative supply of educated workers" since the early 1980s put the college wage premium on steroids.)

wedlock birth ratio would have been only a quarter as high, and the black increase would have been only two-fifths as high."

Census Bureau data show that in 2007, 54.7 percent of men and 51.2 percent of women age 15 or older were married, compared with 69.3 percent and 65.9 percent, respectively, in 1960. University of Maryland sociologist Steven Martin has found that "from 1970 through the 1990s, educational attainment became an increasingly important predictor of marital stability," with divorce rates plunging among the more educated but remaining "high and steady" among the less educated. Meanwhile, women with more education were having fewer children: America's total fertility rate shrank from 3.65 in 1960 to 1.84 in 1980, before bumping up to 2.10 in 2006. Thanks to the collision of these factors and the leap in birthrates among unmarried women, the nonmarital birth ratio ballooned.

Reversing the growth of that ratio was a principal objective of the 1996 welfare-reform bill. The legislation probably did have an impact on nonmarital births, albeit a modest one. After barreling upward for decades, the nonmarital birth ratio hardly budged in the late 1990s. "We did have an unprecedented pause for about four or five years," says Heritage Foundation scholar Robert Rector, a key intellectual architect of the 1996 bill. Indeed, between 1995 and

To the extent that welfare reform had a depressive effect on nonmarital births, the effect proved ephemeral.

So what caused the surge in nonmarital births? And what, if anything, can be done about it? In 1940, fewer than 4 percent of all U.S. births were to unmarried women. Over the next two decades, that figure increased only slightly, rising to 5.3 percent in 1960. The real explosion in nonmarital childbearing started in the 1960s and 1970s. The share of births outside marriage climbed from 10.7 percent in 1970, to 18.4 percent in 1980, to 28 percent in 1990, to 33.2 percent in 2000, and to 39.7 percent in 2007.

Experts continue to squabble about precisely *why* this explosion began when it did. Some point to the incentives created by Great Society welfare programs; others emphasize the cultural shift triggered by the sexual revolution; still others (most prominently, Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson) blame the flight of manufacturing jobs from urban areas. While job loss may have played a small role, it seems clear that political and cultural changes made nonmarital childbearing both more economically feasible and more socially acceptable.

For example, as American social attitudes underwent a transformation, "shotgun marriages" (that is, marriages prompted by a pregnancy) plummeted. In a 1996 *Quarterly Journal of Economics* article, three Berkeley economists—George Akerlof (a 2001 Nobel laureate), Janet Yellen (now president of the San Francisco Fed), and Michael Katz (a former chief economist at the Federal Communications Commission)—compared nonmarital births during two periods: 1965–69 and 1985–89. They estimated that "if the fraction of premaritally conceived births resolved by marriage had been the same from 1985 to 1989 as it had been over the comparable period twenty years earlier, the increase in the white out-of-

2000, the nonmarital birth ratio increased by only 1 percentage point. To offer some perspective, the ratio had increased by 3.6 percentage points between 1970 and 1975, by 4.1 points between 1975 and 1980, by 3.6 points between 1980 and 1985, by 6 points between 1985 and 1990, and by 4.2 points between 1990 and 1995.

The slowdown from 1995 to 2000 was driven by non-Hispanic blacks, whose nonmarital birth ratio fell from 70 percent in 1995 to 68.7 percent in 2000. Over that same period, the ratio among Hispanics jumped from 40.8 percent to 42.7 percent, and the ratio among non-Hispanic whites swelled from 21.2 percent to 22.1 percent. The slight dip in the nonmarital birth ratio among blacks was accompanied by a significant drop in black child poverty. Columbia social scientist Jane Waldfogel attributes the anti-poverty gains among blacks to a booming economy, the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit, and welfare reform.

Alas, to the extent that welfare reform had a depressive effect on nonmarital births, the effect proved ephemeral. Between 2002 and 2007, the overall nonmarital birth ratio spiked by 5.7 percentage points, and the ratio among non-Hispanic blacks rose by 3.2 points. Welfare reform had established incentives for state governments to curb nonmarital births. But Rector contends that, with the exception of Oklahoma, the states failed to respond aggressively. He calls this "the largest disappointment that I had with welfare reform."

So what *should* the states be doing? Beefing up their welfare-to-work programs? There is no evidence that doing so would spur a reduction in nonmarital childbearing, says Rector. One possible strategy would be for states to pursue more vigorous enforcement of their child-support laws. A 2005 study concluded that "greater

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success in enforcing child support, thereby shifting more of the cost of childbearing from unmarried women to their partners, may help reduce nonmarital childbearing significantly." Yet one of the authors of that study, Princeton sociologist Sara McLanahan, told me that the impact would most likely be minimal.

Indeed, the best we can hope to achieve through policy tinkering is slow, incremental progress. But there are concrete steps that federal and state officials should be taking. For starters, they should soften or eliminate the marriage penalties that are implicit in all means-tested welfare programs, such as food stamps, public housing, Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). After conducting a survey of state TANF programs in 2006, welfare expert Robert Moffitt, an economist at Johns Hopkins, and three co-authors wrote that "if a male has financial resources, TANF provides the greatest disincentive to form and/or maintain a biological family, and the least disincentive, if not an incentive, to form an unrelated cohabitor family." Even though some states have embraced "policies to encourage and favor marriage, the TANF eligibility and work-rule structures in these states appear to work against such policies."

Beyond reforming TANF and similar offerings, Rector proposes a vast expansion of marriage-education programs, which he believes should be voluntary, narrowly targeted initiatives designed to assist potential mothers long before conception. Based in high schools, these projects would ideally bring in sympathetic spokespeople—such as current and former single moms—to meet with at-risk women and talk to them about their life goals, the tremendous challenges of raising children, and the benefits of delaying childbearing until marriage. "Low-income single mothers are not hostile to marriage," Rector stresses. He argues that government-funded family-planning clinics should be required to offer referrals to marriage-training programs. (Most of the women who have nonmarital births utilize those public clinics.)

Amato and Maynard note that many such marriage programs already exist, yet "surprisingly few have been rigorously evaluated." During the Bush (43) years, however, the Administration for Children and Families (part of the Department of Health and Human Services) spearheaded three "large-scale" marriage-education projects—Building Strong Families, Supporting Healthy Marriage, and the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative—all of which came "complete with rigorous evaluations." (Each project has at least two more years to go before wrapping up.)

There are, of course, severe limits to how much government can alter longstanding social trends. Ultimately, achieving a deep reduction in the nonmarital-birth ratio will require a major cultural swing. Real progress will take decades, not years. As McLanahan observes, the nonmarital-birth problem is being compounded by "partnership instability" and "multi-partnered fertility," both of which poison family environments and weaken the marital prospects of unwed mothers. "In order to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty," she writes, "we will need to find a way to persuade young women from disadvantaged backgrounds that delaying fertility while they search for a suitable partner will have a payoff that is large enough to offset the loss of time spent as a mother or the possibility of forgoing motherhood entirely."

The task is daunting, and we should be realistic about what public policy can accomplish. But we must also keep in mind that the nonmarital-birth crisis is, well, a crisis—one that has unfolded in slow motion over the past five decades, with tragic consequences. **NR**

THE CONGEALING POT

Today's immigrants are different from waves past

BY JASON RICHWINE

THEY'RE not just like the Irish—or the Italians or the Poles, for that matter. The large influx of Hispanic immigrants after 1965 represents a unique assimilation challenge for the United States. Many optimistic observers have assumed—incorrectly, it turns out—that Hispanic immigrants will follow the same economic trajectory European immigrants did in the early part of the last century. Many of those Europeans came to America with no money and few skills, but their status steadily improved. Their children outperformed them, and their children's children were often indistinguishable from the "founding stock." The speed of economic assimilation varied somewhat by ethnic group, but three generations were typically enough to turn "ethnics" into plain old Americans.

This would be the preferred outcome for the tens of millions of Hispanic Americans, who are significantly poorer and less educated on average than native whites. When immigration skeptics question the wisdom of importing so many unskilled people into our nation at one time, the most common response cites the remarkable progress of Europeans a century ago. "People used to say the Irish or the Poles would always be poor, but look at them today!" For Hispanics, we are led to believe, the same thing will happen.

But that claim isn't true. Though about three-quarters of Hispanics living in the U.S. today are either immigrants or the children of immigrants, a significant number have roots here going back many generations. We have several ways to measure their intergenerational progress, and the results leave little room for optimism about their prospects for assimilation.

Before detailing some of those analyses, we should recognize the importance of this question. If we were to discover that, say, Slovenian immigrants did not assimilate over several generations, there would be little cause for alarm. There are simply too few Slovenian Americans to change our society in a meaningful way. Hispanics, on the other hand, have risen from 4 percent to 15 percent of the American population since 1970. The Census Bureau projects that, if there is no change in immigration policy, 30 percent of the nation will be Hispanic by 2050. To avoid developing a large economic underclass, we need to confront the question of whether they will assimilate.

The children of Hispanic immigrants (the second generation) actually stay in school much longer and earn a considerably higher wage than their parents. In fact, the Hispanic rate of assimilation from the first to the second generation is only slightly lower than the assimilation rate of more successful groups of immigrants. Most second-generation Hispanics make up nearly as much ground as the children of European immigrants would if they grew up in the same disadvantaged situation.

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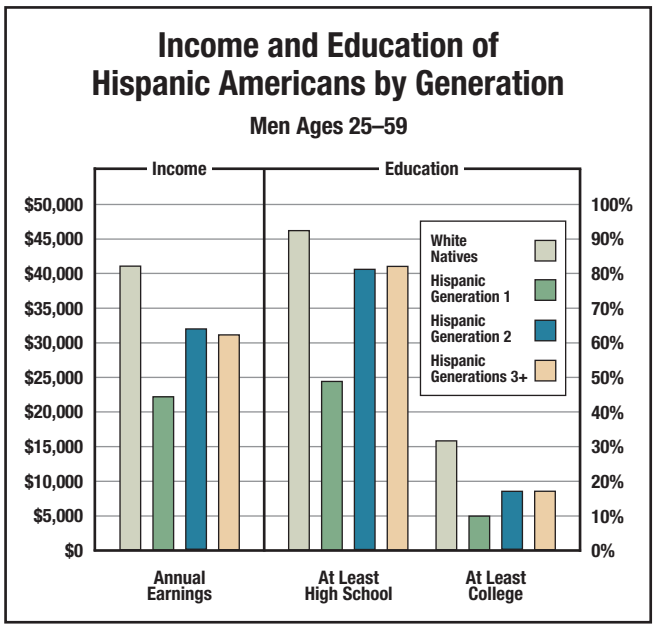
But the good news ends there, and two problems arise. First, the second generation still does not come close to matching the socioeconomic status of white natives. Even if Hispanics were to keep climbing the ladder each generation, their assimilation would be markedly slower than that of other groups. But even that view is overly optimistic, because of the second, larger problem with Hispanic assimilation: It appears to stall after the second generation. We see little further ladder-climbing from the grandchildren of Hispanic immigrants. They do not rise out of the lower class.



SOURCE: 2006 CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY

The most straightforward statistical evidence of this stall in Hispanic assimilation comes from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which asks respondents their ethnicity, where they were born, and where their parents were born. From this information we can construct an account of the first generation (foreign-born), the second generation (born in the U.S. with at least one foreign-born parent), and the "3+" generations (born in the U.S. to two U.S.-born parents) among the Hispanic respondents.

This chart shows how Hispanic Americans compare with white natives generation by generation. The annual earnings of second-generation Hispanic men are substantially higher than those of the first generation. However, the 3+ generations have about the same earnings as the second, still well below white natives. No generational progress beyond the second generation is evident.

The educational picture does not look much better. The children of Hispanic immigrants are much better educated than their parents. However, American-born Hispanics still have high dropout and low college-completion rates compared with white natives, and there is little improvement from the second to the 3+ generations. Again, progress stalls.

These results do not depend on the time period considered. Economists Jeffrey Grogger and Stephen Trejo reached the same conclusions when they used CPS data from the mid-1990s for a similar analysis of Mexican Americans. And other datasets tell the same story. One study reported results from the Latino National Political Survey, conducted in 1989 and 1990. Among its striking findings was that the percentage of Mexican-American households with incomes higher than $50,000 rose from 7 percent in the first generation to 11 percent in the second. But the same statistic in the third and fourth generations stayed at 11 percent, at a time when the national rate was 24 percent. Another study, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, began tracking a representative sample of young Americans in 1979. By 1993, the Hispanic 3+ generations in that sample had, if anything, slightly *worse* outcomes than the second generation in terms of wages, educational attainment, and cognitive test scores.

THE studies discussed so far are cross-sectional—statistical snapshots captured at single points in time. Since each of the generations being compared lives in the same era, the second-generation respondents are not the actual children of the first generation, nor are the third-generation respondents the children of the second. But longitudinal studies—taking one cohort of Hispanic immigrants, then examining their children and their children's children over several decades—tell a similarly pessimistic story.

Economist James P. Smith pieced together census and CPS data starting in 1940 and ending in 1997. He was able to compare eight different immigrant birth cohorts with their children and grandchildren in later years. Smith found that, contrary to the cross-sectional studies, the Hispanic educational deficit relative to whites did become smaller between the second and 3+ generations. This might indicate an increase in their skills relative to whites, but it might also reflect the trend in the mid-20th century for working-class people to stay in school longer. Did the educational gains for Hispanics affect their relative earning power?

Not by much. The table below, reproduced from Smith's study, shows average Hispanic-American and Mexican-American earnings by birth cohort and generation as a percentage of average white-native earnings. In the six most recent cohorts, the Hispanic panel shows only modest gains from the second to the 3+ generations. For example, Hispanic immigrants born between 1915 and 1919 earned 70.9 percent of what contemporary white natives earned. The children of those immigrants earned 82.3 percent, and the immigrants' grandchildren earned 84.8 percent.

Hispanic- and Mexican-American Earnings as a Percentage of White-Native Earnings

	Hispanic Generation			Mexican Generation		
Year of Birth	1	2	3+	1	2	3+
1880–1884	55.5	71.5	78.7	41.6	63.1	77.8
1885–1889	52.9	70.3	78.7	40.0	68.7	77.6
1890–1894	71.8	74.6	77.4	64.7	74.2	73.3
1895–1899	60.5	76.3	81.9	54.5	76.8	83.8
1900–1904	74.1	78.5	79.1	70.2	75.1	74.4
1905–1909	75.1	79.2	83.0	67.4	80.1	78.8
1910–1914	69.7	82.9	80.2	65.3	81.2	79.2
1915–1919	70.9	82.3	84.8	65.8	83.8	83.2

SOURCE: SMITH, "ASSIMILATION ACROSS THE LATINO GENERATIONS"

For Mexicans in particular the picture is even worse. In five of the six most recent birth cohorts, the Mexican 3+ generations earn a marginally *lower* fraction of the white-native wage than does the second generation.

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A similar longitudinal analysis was recently conducted by UCLA sociologists Edward E. Telles and Vilma Ortiz. They revived a 1960s-era cross-sectional survey of Mexican Americans by re-interviewing many of the original respondents more than 40 years later. By adding information about the parents and children of the respondents in this second survey wave, the authors were able to construct a longitudinal dataset similar to Smith's. Their results show continued improvement in high-school-graduation rates from the second to the 3+ generations, but small gains in college graduation and stagnant relative wages.

Taken as a whole, the research on Hispanic assimilation presents two possible conclusions. Either Hispanic assimilation will be exceedingly slow—taking at least four or five generations, and probably several more—or it will not happen. In either case, Hispanic immigration will have a serious long-term consequence: The grandchildren of today's Hispanic immigrants will lag far behind the grandchildren of today's white natives.

So why do Hispanics, on average, not assimilate? Theories abound. Popular explanations from the left include the legacy of white racism, labor-market discrimination, housing segregation, and poor educational opportunities. Those on the right tend to cite enforced multiculturalism, ethnic enclaves, and a self-perpetuating culture of poverty. One would need a whole book to sort out these competing explanations, but we can safely say that none of them, even if true, suggests easy solutions. Social scientists have not devised any set of programs that effectively spurs assimilation.

That assimilation has stalled even among third-generation Hispanics growing up today is especially sobering. In the early 20th century, the quality of schools varied greatly, high-school graduation was unusual, travel was relatively difficult, and universities and employers were free to discriminate based on ethnicity. Today all but the worst inner-city schools are well funded, high-school graduation is expected, traveling around the country to look for work is much easier, and affirmative-action programs give preferences to Hispanics. Despite these advantages over earlier immigrants, today's Hispanics have not closed the socioeconomic gap with white natives.

Though continuing research on the barriers to Hispanic assimilation will be valuable, the reality is that no intervention in the foreseeable future will change the very slow and perhaps nonexistent assimilation process into a fast and effective one.

THE consequences of a large ethno-cultural group's lagging behind the majority in education and income are significant. In strictly economic terms, perpetually poor immigrants and their descendants will be a major strain on social spending and infrastructure. Health care, public education, welfare payments, the criminal justice system, and programs for affordable housing will all require more tax dollars. When pro-immigration conservatives declare that these government programs should be scaled back or eliminated entirely, I am sympathetic. But a large public sector is a reality that cannot be wished away—we will not be abolishing Medicaid or public schools anytime soon. Immigration policy needs to take that reality into account.

Even if economics were not a concern, the lack of Hispanic assimilation is likely to create ethnic tensions that threaten our cultural core. Human beings are a tribal species, and this makes ethnicity a natural fault line in any society. Intra-European ethnic divisions have been largely overcome through economic assimilation—Irish and Italian immigrants may have looked a bit different from natives, but by the third generation their socioeconomic profiles were similar. Hispanic Americans do not have that benefit.

Persistent ethnic disparities in socioeconomic status add to a sense of "otherness" felt by minorities outside the economic mainstream. Though it is encouraging that Hispanics often profess a belief in the American creed, an undercurrent of this "otherness" is still apparent. For example, a Pew Hispanic Center Survey in 2002 asked American-born Hispanics "which terms they would use *first* to describe themselves." Less than half (46 percent) said "American," while the majority said they primarily identified either with their ancestral country or as simply Hispanic or Latino. This feeling of otherness probably helps spur explicit ethnic organizing and lobbying. Already there is a long list of Hispanic interest groups—the National Council of La Raza, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, and the Hispanic Lobbyists Association, to name just a handful. If Hispanics fail to assimilate, these groups will remain powerful, and they will continue to encourage Hispanics and other Americans to view our society in terms of inter-ethnic competition. It is difficult to see how a unifying national culture can be preserved and extended in that environment.

TWO major changes to our immigration policy are needed to remedy the assimilation problem. First, we should drastically reduce illegal immigration. In the early part of this decade, the illegal-immigrant population saw a net increase of about 515,000 people per year, two-thirds of whom were from Mexico and Central America. The recession appears to have reduced illegal border crossings significantly, but the problem will surely return when our economy improves.

The second change concerns our *legal* immigration system. While it is important that spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens be allowed to immigrate, our present policy extends well beyond the nuclear family. U.S. citizens can sponsor their parents; their adult children, who may bring their own spouses and children with them; and their adult brothers and sisters, who may also bring their own spouses and children with them. These new green-card holders can then acquire citizenship and bring in their own extended families, perpetuating the cycle. This is "chain migration," and it causes the number of unskilled immigrants in the U.S. to increase swiftly.

It need not continue. Instead of bringing large extended families with limited skills into the U.S., we could specifically select for the qualities—education and work experience, for example—that help immigrants succeed. How would such a system work? We need only look north to see it in practice. Canada assigns points to potential immigrants for various desirable characteristics. For example, holding a graduate degree is worth five times as many points as is holding a high-school diploma. Australia has a similar system. In fact, Canada and Australia take in proportionally three to four times as many immigrants for economic reasons as the U.S. does, and fewer than half as many for family reunification.

Of course, precisely which factors to select for is itself a controversial question, and should be debated in the political arena. But that debate can begin only when we let go of our sepia-toned memories of immigration past. Who gets in really does matter, and we should not let the success of Europeans who came here a hundred years ago obscure that fact. **NR**

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Afghan Postcards

BY ROMAN GENN

Roman Genn, whose illustrations have long brightened the pages of National Review, embedded himself with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, at Forward Operating Base Gulistan in Farah Province, central Afghanistan. Genn reports that the Marines "exhibited gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty by tolerating your humble doodler's permanent bitching and whining." The following drawings depict some of what he saw.

Mohamedeen, for some reason, thinks I owe him money. He is definitely *Taliban. Cpl. John Radu and 'Terp—that's "Interpreter"—Hakimi converse with locals in Gulistan over the course of a lovely morning stroll.*

Flying "business class" from Helmand to Kandahar: Marines in a CH-53E helicopter firing "Ma Deuce."

Cpl. Matt Ford, Forward Operating Base Gulistan's chef de cuisine, *divulges a piece of highly classified information: the recipe for "Cookie Ford's Famous Steak Sauce." Two tablespoons of C-4, three tablespoons of PETN, one teaspoon of RDX, and a light touch of tetryl. Or whatever the explosive-ordnance-disposal techs are willing to spare.*

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"I haven't had my mail for a month and would certainly love to know where the guy responsible for this parks his car," says explosives technician Gunnery Sergeant Matthew. He emphasizes that he does not want to blow up his fellow Marine but is going nuts without his cigarettes. "You gotta have a pretty sick sense of humor to stay sane here," he says. "We blow things up for a living. That's not normal."

"It's the third time that we have had to replace this window," says business-development manager Sharif Ayoubi, inspecting the damage with real-estate agent Nasir Ayoubi after a suicide bombing in the Wazir Akbar Khan district of Kabul. "We are kind of used to it. Would you like to come in for a cup of chai and to look at some hot property? No? Ah, well. See you gentlemen at the next explosion."

*Sub-governor Quasim Khan of Farah Province, along with prosecutor Amir Mohammed and census officer Hashim Khan, visit FOB Gulistan. "Do not be fooled by the way we look," Khan says. "If the president starts wearing Versace, so will we—*our *president, that is." Also: "Naturally, we prefer single-malt Scotch, but we would settle for some Ukrainian 'medicine.' We didn't beat the Soviets by staying sober."*

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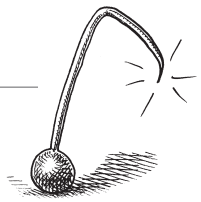

The Bent Pin BY FLORENCE KING

Unmanning the Ship of State

In the annals of love's sweet sacrifice, England has had the Duke of Windsor and now the U.S. has Mark Sanford, the Gaucho Guv of South Carolina. The similarities end there. Let the differences begin:

The Duke's brief and concise abdication speech was written by a famous practitioner of English prose, Winston Churchill. The Gaucho Guv's speech was neither brief nor concise nor written, but made up as he went along and drenched in the style of another famous practitioner of English prose, Barbara Cartland.

The wheels of the abdication turned swiftly. Immediately after broadcasting his speech, the ex-king bowed to his brother, who only 20 minutes before had bowed to him, and boarded a ship to take him into exile that very night. But now, weeks later, not only is the Gaucho Guv still with us, he hasn't even finished his speech yet.

The biggest difference between these two lovesick men is one of attitude. The duke was privately neurotic but publicly impervious thanks to the sexual carte blanche bestowed upon royalty since time immemorial. He had grown up seeing his grandfather, Edward VII, get every woman he ever wanted for the asking. Sin and guilt simply did not exist, and adultery was not only permissible but required. It was understood and universally accepted that royalty seduced married women only. The king would never "compromise" a virgin lest the scandal prevent her from making a socially desirable marriage; i.e., she would have been ruined had she been ruined. The divine right of kings might have been constitutionally dead but psychologically it was very much alive. As Edward VII lay dying, Queen Alexandra performed the most generous act in the history of wives, sending a car for his last mistress, Mrs. Keppel, to bring her to his bedside so they could say goodbye. As for the common people, they derived a subconscious reassurance from the set-up because it satisfied their atavistic need to know that their chieftain was virile.

It's a little different for a governor from below the Smith & Wesson line. There, sin and guilt are the linchpins of Christian conservatism and the common people are beset by an atavistic need to know that their chieftain is a Family Man. Normal lustiness and the inevitable yen for variety are in perpetual conflict with the reigning sociology. Adultery is on everyone's mind because everyone reads the Bible, in whose pages it is also on everyone's mind. As the boiling point approaches, these tormented folk ward off danger with a simultaneous blend of denial and acknowledgment that emerges in the Nashville Sound.

Adultery is a major theme of country music. The subject is approached more jauntily now than it used to be, but in its heyday Nashville churned out songs about guilt-racked and heartbroken sexual malcontents. Two etched on my mind that the Gaucho Guv must have grown up hearing are "I'm Throwing Rice (at the Girl That I Love)" and "One Has My Heart, the Other Has My Name." Some years ago, someone surveyed Southern writers for suggested country-song titles and John Shelton Reed came up with "My Tears Spoiled My Aim." My favorite entry was "I'll Love Her Till the Ocean Wears Rubber Pants to Keep Its Bottom Dry." At the end of the day, everything sounds like Barbara Cartland on grits.

Several commentators have taken the Gaucho Guv's side and claimed to feel sorry for him. I'll buy some of that provided we distinguish between compassion and pity. To me he is the provincial married man at an out-of-town convention in a big-city hotel, desperately hoping that this time—this trip, this escape—the sweeping romantic frenzy he has long craved will come his way. When he swears it's not "just sex" he's telling the truth. He wants to flee the whole panoply of Family Man identity and enter a world of plangent stares, whispered phone calls, coded notes, rendezvous, trysts, intrigue, danger, and loss—of what he's not sure; what matters is being able to say, "This has never happened to me before." That's the trouble: Nothing ever has. A worldly man looks for the woman and then finds love, but the Family Man, like a new subscriber to eHarmony.com, has the love ready and waiting and then sets out to find the woman to go with it.

The Gaucho Guv does not deserve all the blame for his performance. He and his ilk are the creation of the feminist years when women nagged men to stop being so laconic and talk more. You got it, babe. Once they sounded like Gary Cooper in *High Noon*; now they are all vying for the title role in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Even more inadvertently, women created the New Family Man. The original Family Man left for the office before the kids were up, returned after they had gone to bed, brought work home, ate what was put in front of him without comment, and then fell asleep so he could get up and work some more. This wasn't good enough for women, however, so they lifted the feminine mystique of hearth and home off their own shoulders, draped it over men's, and nagged them to put their families first. You got it, babe. Nearly every TV ad shilled by a man claims that he uses the product, whatever it is, for his family.

Politicians of every stripe no longer speak of Americans, but of "Americans and their families." If they forget, they go back and add "andtheirfamilies," running it all together as if it were a second nationality. And of course, there's the new criminal raison d'être: "I want to spend more time with my family."

I have some atavistic needs of my own. One of them is to hear men sound like men again instead of eunuchoid servitors of the male feminine mystique. Think where we'd be if they had always talked like this:

"I have not yet begun to fight for my family."

"Liberty and family, now and forever, one and inseparable."

"My family, right or wrong." NR

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The Long View

BY ROB LONG

From the Henry Louis Gates diaries . . .

May 3, 1997:

Called 9-1-1 this morning at 02:34:42 and reported that my house was on fire. The fire trucks arrived at 02:45:01. I showed them the time on my stopwatch. It took over ten minutes for them to arrive. How long would it take them to arrive if a white man called? When I asked them, they became quite rude and belligerent, as did the neighbors, who apparently are too racist and bigoted to understand that the only way to really test the response time for the fire department is to call them in the middle of the night. Obviously, I know the sirens are going to be loud. I've seen a fire truck before. Do they think an African-American male hasn't seen a fire truck? When I called my attorney a few minutes later to inform him of this event . . .

Oct. 9, 1999:

. . . when I distinctly remembered ordering the 1962 Montrose, which to my palate is a lot more approachable. So when the sommelier brought the 1963—I guess he thought a black man in America couldn't tell the difference between a closed, tannic '63 Bordeaux and an open, relaxed, fully developed soft fruit '62—I demanded an explanation. Which—typically for someone of his high-forehead, deep-eye-furrow skull construction—he found baffling. He was about to become belligerent when I decided to become belligerent, and I sent the racist back to the restaurant's cellar for the 1962 Montrose, which, ironically enough, when it was properly opened and decanted (another encounter with racism!), I found slightly past its prime. The redolent nose of brambles, ground meat, cigar box, and blackberry jam wasn't quite all there, as I had anticipated, and I punished the bigot who served it by neglecting to leave a tip, which of course led me to deliver another much-deserved disquisition on racism as I waited for my BMW 750il to be brought by the racist valet, who had eyed me suspiciously earlier in the evening . . .

Jan. 14, 2004:

. . . like a lot of Chinese. Typical. They're all basically racists, especially the ones that look at you with that blank Oriental expression, like an "I don't know why you're so angry, Mr. Angry Black Man, we're from China, stop yelling" type thing. Well, I'm not falling for it. No sir. I did so order the orange chicken, and when I got home and unpacked the take-out bag to find no orange chicken, I did the only rational thing an African-American man in my position could do. I called my attorney. We spent most of that afternoon drawing up the lawsuit and filing the papers, and were so absorbed by this that neither one of us noticed the Chinese food on the counter, getting cold. That meant another call to the Oriental bigots for another order of General Tso's beef with broccoli, steamed pork dumplings, house-special fried rice, and of course orange chicken, which is my favorite. When I got into the car to drive to the restaurant to pick up the order, though, I discovered a container of orange chicken in the passenger-side seat well. It must have rolled out of the bag, which is why it wasn't there when I unpacked the order in the kitchen. At which point, I was faced with a dilemma: Do I drop my lawsuit against the racist restaurateurs because, technically, they included the orange chicken in my order? Or do I persevere because, generally speaking, Asians are bigots and this could be a useful teaching moment? I pondered this as I ate the cold orange chicken in the car and realized that African Americans in America are often faced with these kinds of issues . . .

April 9, 2008:

Called 9-1-1 early this morning to report a serial killer in my home at 04:52:01. The cops arrived at 04:59:01, which is better than the fire department, I guess, but still suggests that the police department is perfectly comfortable taking seven whole minutes to get to the scene of a violent crime and letting a black man get murdered by a serial killer. They were quite disturbed to be shown the evidence of their racism—I was on the front lawn when they arrived, sirens wailing and guns drawn, with my stopwatch in hand—and threatened me with brutality, coercion, and something called "a false-alarm citation," which is Jim Crow all over again. Of course the neighbors were upset, but it's hardly my fault that in America racist cops take hours to answer calls from black men . . .

July 10, 2009:

. . . and the president and I both realized, as we rode together in Air Force One, that racism in America is getting worse and worse. "Look down there," I said, as we flew over some awful middle-class housing development. "Racists as far as the eye can see." He nodded sagely. "And God, they're all so tacky," I added.

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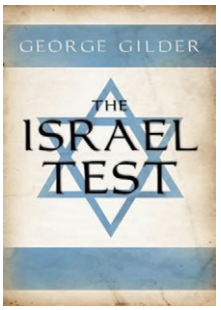
Pass This Test

JAY NORDLINGER



The Israel Test, by George Gilder
(Richard Vigilante, 296 pp., $27.95)

GEORGE GILDER is a phenomenon. With a restless and questing mind, he has written books on feminism, capitalism, technology, and other topics. These books are absorbing, provocative, and somewhat original. Do you know how hard it is to be even somewhat original? There is nothing new under the sun. But Gilder notices things under the sun that escape most people's attention. He seems to have three thoughts a second. He comes at you with a fire hose of thoughts. Most of them are true-ringing, and all of them merit consideration.

Now he has written a book about Israel, that critical issue of our time. But he has not dropped prior concerns: This is a book about capitalism and technology too. Really, it is a book about civilization and barbarism, life and death. Israel occasions the biggest thoughts.

The book is called *The Israel Test*, and you will want to know what that test is. I will let Gilder tell you—he has some questions: "What is your attitude toward people who excel you in the creation of wealth or in other accomplishment? Do you aspire to their excellence, or do you seethe at it? Do you admire and celebrate exceptional achievement, or do you impugn it and seek to tear it down?"

Gilder's idea is that people who have a problem with Israel have a problem with human efflorescence, freedom, genius, and difference. He reminds me of Paul Johnson, who says that those who hate America in fact hate humanity itself: because people from all over the world gather in America to live as fully, freely, and happily as possible.

Early in his book (as later), Gilder discusses the astounding success of Jews. "In countries where Jews are free to invent and create, they pile up conspicuous wealth"—and in so doing "arouse envy and suspicion." The author quotes Gorky, who said, "Whatever nonsense the anti-Semites may talk, they dislike the Jew only because he is obviously better, more adroit, and more capable of work than they are."

The debate over anti-Semitism—its origins—is long, complicated, and, to me, ultimately unsatisfying. Take Japan: Anti-Semitism is very big there; and scarcely a Jew has ever set foot on those islands. What gives? Gilder chalks up anti-Semitism to envy, a green-eyed monster that, at its most ferocious, kills, even genocidally. And he says that "the hatred of Jews epitomizes a general resentment of excellence and creativity."

As I said, to me, nothing is ultimately satisfying, where an explanation of anti-Semitism is concerned. The disease is as baffling as it is persistent. But Gilder makes his case with his usual verve and power.

It is clear that the world hath need of Jews. Gilder writes, "Their genius has leavened the culture and economy of the world." Whenever non-Jews have killed or exiled the Jews, they have hurt themselves, as well as the Jews (although we need not spend much time feeling sorry for the persecutors). I remember reading, at Yad Vashem, a striking fact: Before 1933, Germans were awarded 37 Nobel prizes; and 11 of them went to Jewish Germans.

In Gilder's pages, we relearn the "golden rule of capitalism": "The good fortune of others is also one's own." This is hard for a great many people—probably most people—to accept. The leveling temptation is very strong. "Anti-capitalists, like anti-Semites throughout history," writes Gilder, "have always been obsessed with the 'gaps' everywhere discernible between different groups: gaps of income, power, achievement, and status." And efforts to eliminate or even reduce gaps bring stagnation, misery, and even murder. Appeals to "social justice" ought to make our blood run cold; equality of opportunity is what is just and desirable.

The Palestinians are among the most wretched of the earth, but they need not be. At a dinner in Jordan earlier this year, I sat next to an Arab-American professor who had grown up in Gaza. He spoke of the many Arab scientists, engineers, and so on working in Israel (where over 20 percent of the population is Arab). (Contrast this with the hospitality of Arab countries to Jews.) In Israel, said the professor, the talents of Arabs are appreciated and used. How nice if such people could work so fruitfully in Arab countries!

Gilder writes that, "by merely foreswearing violence and taking advantage of their unique position contiguous with the world's most creative people, the Palestinians could be rich and happy." He also says that "the Palestinian Arabs could be a nation tomorrow and a state the day after, if their leaders could let go of the notion that the Jews must die before Palestine can live."

I suspect that, if sane but stubborn Palestinians such as Saeb Erekat and Hanan Ashrawi read *The Israel Test* in the dark of night, with a single bulb near the pillow, they would agree with almost all of it—and never breathe a word about this agreement.

Israel, born (or reborn) in true-believing, cramping socialism, has recently opened and boomed. Gilder tells many stories of Israeli innovation, enterprise, and wealth-creation. It is all world-leading. But Gilder is not a believer in Homo economicus. What I mean is, there is a spiritual component to his work and thought. He attacks the claim that "matter must rule over mind." And he says that "the reign of the algorithm vindicates the monotheist—and capitalist—intuition that the world in the first instance is a manifestation of thought." Is this not metaphysics?

Getting into the nitty-gritty of politics and geopolitics, he says that "the central error of Israel's defenders is to accept the framing of the debate by its enemies." The error is in thinking that "peace depends on some marginal but perpetually elusive improvement in Israel's behavior": maybe a freeze on settlements.

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This is both delusional and dangerous, says Gilder. "Land for peace" has proven a chimera. "The Palestinian regime has as little interest in land as it has in peace."

Gilder is often thought a dreamer and idealist, and in many ways he is, but he is also a realist and a nearly giddy thrower of cold water.

He is bracing on the topic of Jewish self-criticism, and also of Jewish self-hatred. Many Jews have, in a word, "internalized" (unjust) criticisms of themselves. Funny how apologetic they can be about money-making. And this line of Gilder's almost made me spit out what I was drinking: "Jews, amazingly, excel so readily in all intellectual fields that they outperform all rivals even in the arena of anti-Semitism."

Toward the end of his book, Gilder has a chapter on the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, whom he contrasts with the new American president. Obama, he says, is a "fervent" proponent of "the economics of envy," a "compelling spokesman for third world causes and Muslim grievances," and so on. Netanyahu is—not. He is "the obverse of Obama in nearly every way." Gilder details what Netanyahu, like Israel, has been through, in war and peace. And I thought of what Obama recently said about Israeli leaders: that they need to engage in "serious self-reflection." Was that not one of the most clueless and embarrassing presidential utterances in memory?

Gilder explains why Israel and America are linked, sharing a destiny: If America lets Israel go, America itself will not be far behind. I was reminded of Norman Podhoretz, at the end of his well-known 1982 essay "J'Accuse":

> . . . anti-Semitic attacks on Israel . . . are also a cover. They are a cover for a loss of American nerve. They are a cover for the acquiescence in terrorism. They are a cover for the appeasement of totalitarianism. And I accuse all those who have joined in these attacks not merely of anti-Semitism but of the broader sin of faithlessness to the interests of the United States and indeed to the values of Western civilization as a whole.

Gilder's *Israel Test* is an unconventional book, by an unconventional man. He hop-scotches around, following his restless mind, fire-hosing those thoughts at you—yet he is able to tie his thoughts together, in a brilliant synthesis. Along the way, he drops sentences that appear as aphorisms, lines to be written down or memorized: "Everywhere nations claim a resolve to *develop*; but everywhere their first goal is to expropriate, banish, or kill the existing developers."

As he writes, you think of Charles Murray, Thomas Sowell, Natan Sharansky, Podhoretz, and others. And, in fact, Gilder cites these people. The *beaux esprits* are gathering in this volume. And Gilder is rightly unsparing when it comes to other *esprits*—e.g., Thomas L. Friedman, the three-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Seldom has he been so zestily and neatly fileted. Gilder ends his book with a touch of autobiography, telling of some youthful anti-Semitism, of which he was quickly ashamed. "I had blamed the people who had outperformed me." Gilder has surely passed every Israel test since.

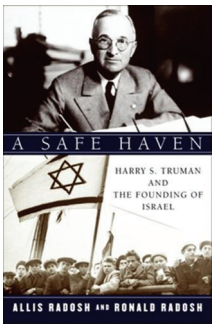
It is a book about civilization and barbarism, life and death. Israel occasions the biggest thoughts.

Before sitting down with this book, I did not think I could read anything new, or newish, about Israel and the Middle East, but I soon found that I could. This book has an infectious enthusiasm. It is at times downright exciting, or thrilling. It will surely go into future editions—and some further proofreading is in order. Just some tidying. Also, there is at least one factual matter: Gilder makes a list of Jewish pianists. Plenty to choose from—but he must strike two non-Jews (Cliburn and, yes, Gould).

You know the waggish old line "Philo-Semitism is the higher anti-Semitism"? It does not always apply. George Gilder is a philo-Semite, and fine thinker, who has performed a noble and useful act. He has told essential truths. Incidentally, he dedicates this book to Midge Decter, an "American sage," as he says. What an honor to be the dedicatee of such a book—one that will affect minds and live long. **NR**

President at The Creation

ARTHUR W. HERMAN



A Safe Haven: Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel, by Allis and Ronald Radosh (Harper Collins, 428 pp., $27.99)

In most world capitals, the creation of Israel—which used to be seen through a heroic lens, as in the film *Exodus*—is now viewed as a matter of regret. The current U.S. administration, too, is rather cool toward Israel. So this is a good time to be reminded of how and why Israel was founded in the first place, and how one American's role in that founding rose to the heroic. Allis and Ronald Radosh have given us an invaluable and compelling account of Pres. Harry Truman's fight against enormous and unscrupulous opposition from within his own administration, in order to make sure America played a public role in the creation of Israel.

"The situation at many of the camps [is] practically as bad as it was under the Germans." That was Truman's reaction on August 24, 1945, to the report of his emissary Earl Harrison about Europe's displaced-persons camps, where the majority of the 1.5 million European Jews who had survived the Holocaust were waiting for the victorious Allied powers, dubbed the United Nations, to decide whether they would have a national home.

The Allies were divided. The British Labour government adamantly opposed allowing the Jews to emigrate to Palestine,

Mr. Herman's latest book, Gandhi and Churchill: The Epic Rivalry That Destroyed an Empire and Forged Our Age *(2008), was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and is now available in paperback.*

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for fear it would inflame Arab opinion, even though previous British governments had promised Zionist leaders a future Jewish homeland there. Russia's Stalin instinctively hated Jews as much as any Arab did—at Yalta he told FDR they were all "profiteers and parasites"—but he was willing to back a Jewish state in Palestine in order to irritate the British. Franklin Roosevelt had supported the idea of a Jewish state until he met Saudi King Ibn Saud shortly after Yalta. To the dismay of American Zionists, Roosevelt reported that on that occasion he learned more about "the Jewish problem . . . by talking to Ibn Saud for five minutes than I could have learned in the exchange of two or three dozen letters."

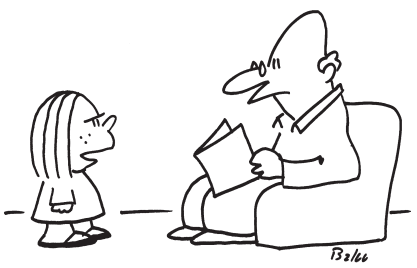
When Roosevelt died in April 1945, it was left to his successor to make up America's mind on this issue, along with others—including dropping the atomic bomb and foiling Stalin's plans for Eastern Europe. Truman later said he faced no more complex or controversial issue than the Israel question.

Should he support a United Nations resolution partitioning Palestine and allowing the creation of a Jewish state alongside an Arab one? On one side, Truman's State Department ferociously said no. Then and later, State's Middle East desk was run by the so-called Arabists, who shared many of the aspirations and prejudices of their Arab clients. They saw Jews as having no place in a future Middle East, whether in Palestine or elsewhere. A U.S. vote to create such a place, they believed, would be a severe blow to our strategic hopes in the region and shut off any future flow of oil from the Middle East (on both counts, they proved to be wrong).

On the other side was a mixed bag of liberals like New York senator Robert Wagner, conservatives like Ohio senator Robert Taft, and various American Zionist and Jewish groups—including the American Jewish Conference—who were understandably galvanized by the possibility of a Jewish state. However, as the Radoshes show, Israel's supporters in 1948 were lousy lobbyists, divided among themselves. If it hadn't been for two men, Truman might well have yielded to the enormous pressure from State, against his own view that the Jews, like everyone else, deserved a homeland in a post-war world.

One of them was Chaim Weizmann, friend to Winston Churchill and longtime champion of the Zionist cause. He came to New York City and the U.N. for one last push to get America on board. The other was Eddie Jacobson, Truman's Jewish partner from the haberdashery business and his closest friend, who took up the cause of Israel and became Jewish groups' point man in getting messages to the White House. No other person played a greater role in outmaneuvering Israel's powerful opponents, who included Secretary of State George Marshall. Jacobson would go on to become Truman's unofficial ambassador to Israel after the nation was born on May 14, 1948.

The State Department did everything it could to prevent that birth. It importuned the British to remain in Palestine. When that failed, at the last minute Truman's U.N. ambassador sabotaged the president's clearly stated policy by switching the U.S. vote from supporting partition of Palestine to supporting a more or less permanent U.N. trusteeship. A furious Truman had to read the riot act to Marshall and Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett. It was as close as Truman and his semi-deified secretary of state came to breaking publicly on an issue. Marshall relented, but told Truman he intended to vote against him in the upcoming presidential election.



"We learned about Vietnam in school today, Grandpa—shame on you!"

There is some irony in this. If there was any political calculation in Truman's decision to support the creation of Israel, it was based on his advisers' fear of losing the Jewish vote in New York, a state that was crucial for his reelection. Truman lost New York anyway, although he still managed to stay in the White House. (The other northeastern state where the Jewish vote was crucial was Pennsylvania; Truman lost there, as well.)

The night of May 13, some 75,000 people turned out for a celebration at Madison Square Garden. However, by and large the creation of Israel was not an issue that unified American Jewish groups, then or later. Indeed, some, including the American Council for Judaism, were positively hostile. If it had been left to American Jews alone, it is doubtful whether the U.S.'s alliance with Israel would have been as strong as it has turned out to be.

If it had been left to American Jews alone, it is doubtful whether the U.S.'s alliance with Israel would have been as strong as it has turned out to be.

What was true then is true today. Barack Obama is arguably the most anti-Israel president ever, yet—with the exception of blacks—no American ethnic group voted more solidly for Obama than America's Jews.

Instead, American support for Israel has come to rest on other, more solid grounds. It is partly strategic. A great deal of it comes from American Protestants, such as today's evangelical Right (and, in his day, President Truman himself). Some of it comes from a commitment to support a fellow democratic-pluralist society, especially when it's under siege.

And it may also come from a lingering sense, as Winston Churchill put it, that the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine is an event "to be viewed in the perspective, not of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand, or even three thousand years." Supporting Israel was and is an act of gratitude toward the religion and people who stood at the founding of Western civilization, and without whom we would not exist. Men like Churchill and Truman understood it was important to return the favor. **NR**

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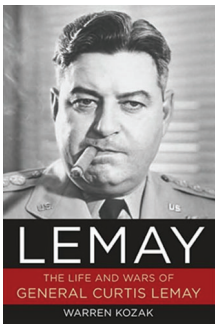
American Ajax

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON



LeMay: The Life and Wars of General Curtis LeMay, by Warren Kozak (Regnery, 354 pp., $27.95)

ALMOST every aspect of the Dr. Strangelovian image surrounding Gen. Curtis LeMay was in some way misleading. The tough-guy cigar provocatively dangling from his mouth had little to do with cultivating his iron-pants image. Instead LeMay, in worry that he might be grounded after suffering Bell's palsy, had originally stuck it in his mouth to hide a sagging lip.

Bombing Vietnam "back to the Stone Age" was probably not LeMay's own infamous Neanderthal advice about winning the Vietnam War, but a toss-off line inserted into his autobiography by an overzealous co-author that slipped by LeMay during copy editing. Later, when pressed, he asserted that such a nightmarish strategy reflected only American capability, not American intent.

Did the mad bomber of Japan gleefully and without regret burn its cities to the ground, along with hundreds of thousands of civilians in them? LeMay, in fact, thought carefully about the strategy, approved leaflets warning of the conflagration to come, and, after the war, confessed that he would understandably have been tried as a war criminal if the U.S. had lost.

Why did LeMay accept the offer from the racist Alabama governor George Wallace to serve as his running mate on the 1968 third-party ticket? LeMay knew almost nothing about either Wallace or politics, but with all his fiery rhetoric about not losing in Vietnam or coddling the Russians, apparently a great deal about scaring voters to death. What little campaigning LeMay engaged in was a tragicomedy, as the old fire bomber vainly tried to instruct a horrified public about the possibility of still winning wars in the nuclear age. (It is now forgotten that he ended the campaign in liberal fashion, advocating far-seeing and often quite humane environmentalism.)

The invasion of Japan was avoided by the dropping of two atomic bombs, but had LeMay had his way, by late 1945 and early 1946 there would have been few Japanese industries or urban areas left to fuel the Japanese resistance. We often calculate that the atomic strikes saved a million American lives, but forget that without Hiroshima and Nagasaki another six months of incendiary attacks—perhaps enhanced by shorter flights from newly acquired bases in Okinawa and augmented by transfers of European-theater B-17s and B-24s—would have taken millions more Japanese lives.

Warren Kozak's new biography is not meant to hide LeMay's abrasiveness and absence of tact. And he does not claim that his revisionist account is the last word about the controversial general, or that he has unearthed radically new information from private LeMay papers or Air Force archives—although Kozak was given access to LeMay's memorabilia and terse correspondence. Rather, Kozak's achievement in this engaging portrait is to have provided a twofold reminder. First, like him or not, Curtis LeMay's brilliance and expertise saved thousands of American lives during World War II, helped to shorten the war, and then restored the American strategic deterrence that was essential in keeping the peace during the Cold War.

Second, the larger LeMay paradox is an old one in American military history, one that has also involved the likes of William Tecumseh Sherman and George Patton: Peace-loving democratic peoples fear fiery warriors in times of calm as much as they clamor for them in extremis. Those whom we applaud in wartime, we usually damn later during peace. So it was with LeMay, who graced the cover of *Time* magazine and, by the end of World War II, was a national icon.

We sometimes forget that LeMay's war career started as commander within the 305th Bomb Group, which began bombing occupied Europe in 1942, in daylight, without fighter escort—and with little strategic effect. Those early missions were suicidal. Green navigators got lost over cloudy, unfamiliar Europe. Inexperienced squadrons were blasted apart by some of the best fighters and pilots in the world. Amid the general American panic, Major and soon Colonel LeMay devised new formations, figured out how to get more bombs over the targets, and was soon flying lead plane on the most dangerous missions of the war, most notably the ill-fated Schweinfurt raid that nearly devastated the morale of the Eighth Air Force.

By late 1944, LeMay was the natural choice to save the faltering B-29 bombing campaign based on the Marianas. Despite the exorbitant cost of the B-29 program—far more than the government investment in the Manhattan Project—the high-altitude bombers were inflicting little damage on the Japanese mainland, even as hundreds were grounded or crashed owing to mechanical mishaps. LeMay's answer was to transform the precisely targeted bomber into a low-flying, overloaded napalm carrier—often at altitudes scarcely over 5,000 feet. Hundreds of B-29s with 20,000 pounds of incendiaries apiece rode in fast on the evening Japanese jet stream, ignited the wooden cities of Japan, and left vast urban swaths in ashes.

My father, who flew on 40 such missions over Japan, often voiced the general ambivalence of the rank and file—furor at the new general who worked the crews to exhaustion and took away their high-

Mr. Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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altitude immunity, coupled with post-war realization that the often callous-sounding LeMay's radical transformations had saved their lives and shortened the war. As Kozak puts it, "Curtis LeMay understood that if he was going to do his job well, he would have to give up any chance at being liked. Not just by the enemy combatants and civilians whom he destroyed by the thousands, but by his own men, whom he pushed without letup."

For the next 20 post-war years, LeMay was at the center of America's military challenges: reforming a struggling Strategic Air Command, initiating the Berlin airlift, clamoring for the use of overwhelming force in Korea, decrying the new doctrine of limited war in Vietnam, and dealing with the threat from newly Communist Cuba. As Kozak points out, it was rather easy to caricature the bulky LeMay as a nut when he advocated sustained, provocative bombing campaigns in an age of mutually assured destruction. But the alternative strategy of limited engagement, as LeMay also foresaw, ultimately cost tens of thousands of lives in Vietnam with no real objective or end in sight.

Kozak does a good job of uncovering the studious and thoroughly professional side of LeMay, one that belies his image as an out-of-control saber-rattler. Even before World War II, he was a flight engineer and an astute navigator, pioneering long-range navigation techniques on the new B-17 bomber. His work led to record-breaking missions to South America and publicity flights that reconnoitered battleships and ocean liners far out at sea.

LeMay was the longest-serving general in our history, and the youngest to reach four-star rank. President Kennedy was no fan of LeMay, but astutely appointed him to the Joint Chiefs, remarking, "I like having LeMay at the head of the Air Force. Everybody knows how he feels. That's a good thing right now." And even LeMay's perennial liberal foe, Robert McNamara, once concluded that Lemay—his former wartime boss—was "the finest military strategist the nation has ever produced."

What are we left with, then, in assessing Curtis E. LeMay? Kozak suggests a tragedy of sorts. LeMay grew up in an age when public-relations ability was largely irrelevant in comparison with personal courage and proven expertise. LeMay's approach—a combination of reticence and occasional blunt talk about victory at any cost—privileged action over rhetoric; it was perfectly suited for the conventional struggle of World War II, and even to the frightening, but far more complex, early years of the Cold War.

But by 1961, Kennedy nuance and cool were in, most people had only foggy memories of B-17s, Russia had nuclear-tipped missiles pointed at our cities, and corporate whiz-kids like Robert McNamara thrived amid the new nexus of Washington politics, media, and corporate interests. LeMay was reduced to the status of a plodding stegosaurus clumsily batting away critics with his spiked swats. In the new calculus, he was not so much uncharismatic as having no charisma whatsoever. George C. Scott's portrayal of Gen. Buck Turgidson in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* was inspired by popular caricatures of LeMay, and Scott's theatrical genius reduced the reserved student of air power to a loudmouthed, demonic psychopath.

Yet LeMay's competence and honesty were never questioned. He did not cash in—as so many have since—by hawking superfluous new weaponry to former subordinates in the Pentagon. And, like a Sophoclean character, LeMay would rather have perished than have changed to facilitate new doctrines of limited war and faith in international peace-keeping organizations. In this sympathetic biography, Warren Kozak lets facts about LeMay speak for themselves and reminds us why one of our greatest soldiers is today hardly recognized.

In short, the LeMay DNA was almost divinely engineered for America's ordeal between 1930 and 1960. When that era passed—and passed without Armageddon, thanks, in large part, to a few brilliant and courageous warriors like LeMay—we were to be done with him as well. **NR**

A GULL

As passive as a dune,
I offer up my breast,
Nestling toward the sun,
Accepting from the west
What I am only owed.
Who cares if you should fade?
Warm me, sinking god:
For me the world was made.

—LEN KRISAK

Over- and Other Drives

FLORENCE KING

Driving Like Crazy, by P. J. O'Rourke
(Atlantic Monthly, 288 pp., $24)

P. J. O'Rourke is not really mad, bad, and dangerous to know, but he's working on it. You can tell from the title of the first chapter in his car-nut memoir: "How to Drive Fast on Drugs While Getting Your Wing-Wang Squeezed and Not Spill Your Drink."

Alas, tempest fidgets, as the Romans used to say—sort of—and we come upon another, very different chapter. In this one, "the drugs are mostly Lipitor," the wing-wang is not so cooperative as it used to be, and spilling drinks is no problem if he uses the sippy cups left over from the kids' toddler days. Once he became a solid family man he began buying solid family vehicles like a Dodge Grand Caravan and a Jeep Cherokee, but he calls them "brat buggies" because his heart is buried at Rent-a-Wreck with the cars he loved in his heyday: real American cars, "cheap to make, simple to fix, and easy to hot-rod."

His grandfather had the Buick dealership in Toledo and the whole family worked there, so cars are in his blood just as surely as gasoline was in his stomach when he fixed a vapor lock by unhooking the fuel line and sucking gas through it. He also perfected his "bootlegger's turn"—hit 70, shift to neutral, cut the wheels to the left, then slam on the brakes. "This can be done on dry pavement," he advises, "but it works best on loose gravel and schoolchildren."

In 1977, *Car and Driver* commissioned him to take a 1956 Buick from Florida to Los Angeles and write up the trip. He got there in eleven days with a breakdown per day. Besides the vapor lock, the engine overheated and he had to get out and pour water over the radiator every few miles; the dash lights refused to work unless the driver's door was opened, so he had to open it while driving to read the temperature gauge to see if the engine was overheating again; in Santa Fe all four wheels came unaligned and splayed in four different directions; and, finally, the reverse

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gear gave out just as he got to Los Angeles. It was so far gone that the car couldn't even be pushed backwards in neutral, so he had to maneuver through heavy traffic without being able to back up. (He goes himself one better in this department with the story of a Fiat that jammed in reverse gear and had to be driven backwards to the garage.)

Nothing delights him more than traveling to the ends of the earth, provided they are accessible by car. He waxes ecstatic about off-roading in places like Baja California, where it's hard to tell the off-roads from the roads. Give him a four-wheel home where 1,400-pound moose roam across the highway, like New Brunswick, and he's ready to roll, maybe over and over. Better yet, put him behind the wheel in one of those places routinely described as "teeming," like India, land of what he calls "ReinCARnation," and watch him drive the "Grand Trunk," where laden elephants, oxcarts, and pack camels amble along and sacred cows graze on what is laughably called a thruway. It would be sheer joy to report that P.J. hit a sacred cow, but he did not, though the car in front of him did and nobody seemed to mind.

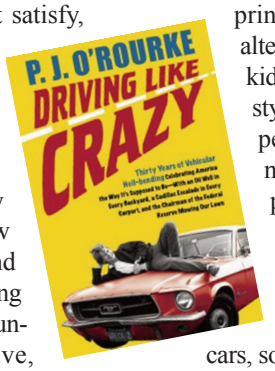
In addition to the drive-a-logues, he offers practical advice on the intimate side of car nuttery. Your true car nut has only one pick-up line: "Wanna go to Mexico?" Furthermore, a young man should date only girls who will have sex in the front seat. The ones who insist on getting in the back are the nice girls who expect marriage. This I can verify. Expressing doubt about the number of lovers a lady has had is verboten because a lady never loses count. So, too, is expecting her to remain in the front seat, because a lady always gets in the back. If any man questions this, she will rap him on the knuckles with her fan.

P.J. is hilarious on the bureaucracy of driving, as when he describes the written portion of New York's driver's-license exam, which contains such questions as "What is the purpose of the steering wheel?" This, he says, tells us all we need to know about New York driving. He much prefers the driving and the drivers at the NASCAR races in Charlotte, N.C., where he found himself drawn to the South and Southerners and experienced an inchoate sensation of happiness that he analyzes in the book's most moving passage:

> What was the difference between the South and the rest of America? . . . There wasn't any. The South *is* the rest of America . . . what we've had all along in this bizarre, slightly troubling, basically wonderful country—fun, danger, real friendliness, energy, enthusiasm, and brave, crazy, tough people. . . . Put us all together and we're the biggest, baddest, best sons of bitches anywhere. . . . Nobody's eating roughage, running marathons, and taking yoga classes down there. People still drink, still smoke, still have guns, and still believe in a personal God who listens to *them*. They're not worried about the future. This country didn't come from people who worried about the future. It came from people who *whipped the future's ass*.

Funny this book may be, but it is first and foremost an angry book. "I take the demise of the American car personally," the author admits. "I'm looking around furiously for someone or something to blame. Ralph Nader for instance. What fun it would be to jump on him with both feet and send the pink Marxist goo squirting out of his cracked egghead. And let's definitely do that even though Ralph is seventy-five and insane."

But Nader alone doesn't satisfy, because there are legions of Naders now. O'Rourke calls them "Fun-Suckers," the neo-prohibitionists and nanny-staters who "achieve power without merit" by going around "saying how unsafe this fun thing is and how unhealthy that fun thing is and how unfair, unjust, uncaring, insensitive, divisive, contagious, and fattening every other thing that's fun is." Fun-Suckers have always been with us, he says, but until the 18th century they were held in check by ruling classes composed of powerful aristocrats for whom having fun was the whole point of life, from gorged Romans trundling to the vomitorium to medieval nobles lustily claiming their *droit du seigneur*. But then came democracy, and raising hell for the hell of it fell upon hard times. Democracy gave the Fun-Suckers freedom, equality, and a platform—just what they needed to run for office and make everybody miserable.



The car was bound to be an irresistible target because it figures in so many of the problems that Fun-Suckers dream of solving, not the least of which is the American love of independence. To turn us into passive zombies they can control, they pass laws decreeing that babies must be "strapped, belted, buckled, and bound into lonely, isolated rear-facing infant carriers where they grew up without normal social contact or human interaction, causing them to become the passive teen video-gaming thumb-twiddlers and pasty Facebookers. . . . These pallid adolescents are easy prey to the brandishers of Nerf hope and the loose change makers who are sucking fun in the Obama administration."

Another weapon of the Fun-Suckers is making fun-lovers feel self-conscious about looking ridiculous. Kids must now wear "bike helmets, knee and elbow pads, shin guards, safety goggles, and steel-toed boots to use the teeter-totter at the playground, after which they have to wipe themselves all over with Purell hand disinfectant." (P.J. doesn't say, but this scaredy-cat sissification might explain the "playground bullying" that Fun-Suckers are so eager to stamp out.)

He believes that the current crop of Fun-Suckers wants to nationalize the auto companies and foresees the 2010 Obamamobile as lightweight, with a small footprint, and able to run entirely on alternative energy: "When I was a kid we called it a Schwinn." As for styling, it will be done by the same people who brought us the Vietnam Memorial. "Your new Impala will be a simple slab with the names of everyone ever killed in a traffic accident engraved on it."

This man really does love cars, so some readers will be lost when he lapses into good-ol'-boy mode, e.g., "a hydraulic-fluid-filled device with variable pitch blades that delivered power from the 322-cubic-inch V-8 . . ." I have no idea what that means, but I can see Russia from my house.

His prose occasionally goes over the top, as in his description of the pink goo oozing from Ralph Nader's crushed skull, but he atones for it with this: "The American automobile industry . . . will live on in some form, a Marley's ghost dragging its corporate chains at taxpayer expense." I forget whether that's called a simile or a metaphor, but an English sentence never had a better tune-up. P. J. O'Rourke might be mad, bad, and dangerous to know, but he can write like an angel. **NR**

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Film

True Love

ROSS DOUTHAT

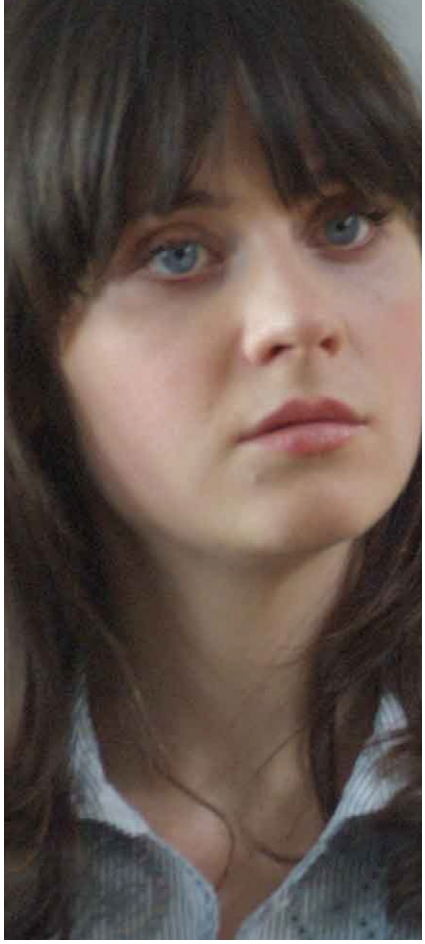
HOLLYWOOD rarely produces effective love stories for men. I don't mean a romantic comedy that some men might find themselves liking, if dragged to the theater by their wives—those are rare, but they certainly exist. (I'm partial to *Bridget Jones's Diary* myself.) And I don't mean a gross-out comedy with a romantic ending tacked on to make the ladies happy: The last act of *Wedding Crashers* may be drenched in estrogen, but a romance for guys it isn't.

No, I mean a romantic film that reverses the normal gender dynamic, by inspiring a shock of recognition in the male psyche and indifference or even dislike from the female of the species. I mean a movie whose central theme is love—love, I said, not sex—that men like *more* than women.

The closest recent cinema has come to this unusual achievement is probably the angsty masculine quest narratives associated with the talented Cameron Crowe and the talentless Zach Braff—movies featuring young men in search of themselves, and the young women they fall in with along the way. These females usually belong to a species that Nathan Rabin, a scribe for *The Onion*, has memorably dubbed the "Manic Pixie Dream Girl." Think of Natalie Portman in *Garden State*, or Kate Hudson in *Almost Famous*, or Kirsten Dunst in *Elizabethtown*—creatures conjured up, as Rabin puts it, by "the fevered imaginations of sensitive writer-directors to teach broodingly soulful young men to embrace life and its infinite mysteries and adventures."

But are these movies really love stories? As Rabin's description suggests, your typical Manic Pixie Dream Girl (MPDG, henceforward) is a means to an end, rather than the end itself. The point of such films is the hero's journey from self-doubt to self-possession: Whether he gets the girl is less important, in the end, than whether she can help him be all that he can be.

There are moments when this summer's *(500) Days of Summer*, a love story with a fractured timeline and a host of clever gimmicks up its sleeve, feels like just another MPDG film. Tom, our sensitive twentysomething hero (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), whiles away his days writing copy for greeting cards. The quirky, lovely, mysterious Summer Finn (Zooey Deschanel) comes along and snaps him out of it. She has bangs, wears hipster housedresses, and listens to all the right bands. They sing karaoke together, and watch *The Graduate*, and play house in Ikea. By the end of the movie, he's ditched his pointless, inauthentic job and enrolled in architecture school. Hurrah!



Zooey Deschanel as Summer Finn

FOX SEARCHLIGHT

Except that along the way, he's been absolutely and completely destroyed by her—and this, not his self-actualization or career awakening, is the substance of the movie and the source of its interest and appeal.

"This is not a love story," a wry, omniscient narrator intones. "This is a story about love." Whether that distinction makes sense I'm not quite sure, but the point is clear enough: This isn't a film about what love can do *for* you (the point of every MPDG movie), but what love can do *to* you. In other words, don't expect a happy ending, folks, and expect a lot of suffering.

Admittedly, *(500) Days of Summer* is a tragicomedy, not an outright tragedy, and it concludes on something like a high note. But it captures, more successfully than any recent movie, exactly what it means to be a young man in love with a woman who likes you back but doesn't love you back. And what that means is false hopes, premature euphoria, mounting uncertainty, growing desperation—and, eventually, misery.

(500) Days of Summer plays around with this trajectory, leaping back and forth through time, from Day Eight of the Tom-Summer love affair to Day 268, then backward to happier times, then forward again to loss, denial, and despair. It sounds gimmicky, but the fast-forward/rewind works: Crucial conversations, months apart, are juxtaposed; dysfunctional patterns are exposed; and the essential hopelessness of Tom's quest is never far from view. The structure fits with the way failed relationships are remembered—not as a long descent from joy to sorrow, but as a jumble of competing memories, all of them potent, none of them lost.

The movie has plenty of false notes: Some characters are too precious—like Tom's wise-child little sister, precocious and unbearable—and others are too stock, and the narrator's interjections quickly start to grate. But there's an awful lot here that's shockingly true, and shockingly effective. (The best sequence, near the end, plays a party at Summer's house in split-screen: On one side we see what Tom hopes will transpire; on the other we see what really happens.) This isn't just a movie about the way a certain kind of man experiences a certain kind of love affair. It's a movie about the way our age's mix of ambiguities and promiscuities—the collapse of bright lines separating friends from lovers, sex from commitment, and casual relationships from serious ones—makes doomed love that much easier to stumble into.

I can't imagine very many women caring for it, though. We see Summer Finn only through Tom's besotted eyes, which means that she's alluring, capricious, opaque, and not particularly relatable. If you can't imagine falling in love with Summer, you probably won't like her very much. You'll think that this is a love story—or, sorry, a story about love—made by men for men, in which the female psyche gets short shrift.

And you'll be right. But that's precisely what's so good about it. **NR**

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City Desk

Years of Upheaval

RICHARD BROOKHISER

GETTING a city apartment painted is a trial for several reasons. The rent laws encourage city-dwellers to stay put; over the years our possessions accumulate unwinnowed. The crampitude of our island encourages ingenious packing and storing; nuts in a chipmunk burrow are not more carefully stowed away. So, when the decorator's white starts ripening to subway gray and the time comes to apply another coat, the task of readying the apartment for the painter and then readying it, after he is done, for habitation becomes formidable.

My wife and I considered the battle space: two bedrooms (one, her office); two baths; kitchen; and an S-shaped dining room/living room/hallway. We divided these spaces into ten areas, and arranged with a painter to attack them one by one on weekends. Mid-week we took things apart, a tornado of rearranging; on the days of rest he worked; Sunday evening we put everything madly back, and then, for two months, the process began again.

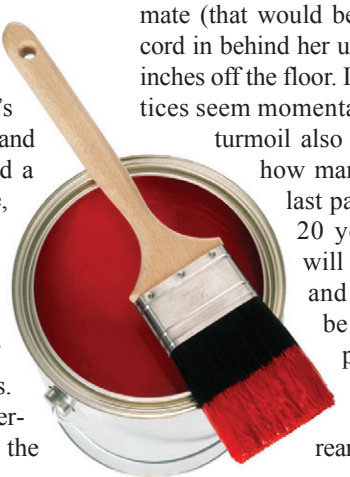
The building we live in dates from the Kennedy administration; we have been living here since Carter. The biggest change over that time has been the computer age. The home office, supposed Nirvana of convenience, has brought, not only the inconvenience of home maintenance, but nests of wires that connect screens, keyboards, mouses, printers, faxes, and routers to hard drives, outlets, and one another. Move a desk an inch and it's like the death of Laocoön and his sons back there. I suppose the youngsters have everything in their handhelds, and soon enough the continent will be a hot spot, from South Beach to Palin-land. But those solutions are not yet ours. Unplugging and plugging all this took the guile of Ariadne. The kitchen, by contrast, is the bastion of old technology, but no easier for that. Thank Heaven we could not move the stove, a built-in Royal Rose with a blue and white spotted-metal interior; I am sure it could not be replaced if damaged. The walls are festooned with the implements our grandmothers knew: knives, choppers, pans, spiders, colanders, ladles, corkscrews, bottle-openers, cherry-pitters, honey-drippers, apple-corers, ice-cream scoops. Add a salad spinner, a microwave, and a few wooden wine crates for storage and you have a good day's work.

I have a friend, a serious collector of paintings and prints, who calls his apartment a museum. He could actually invite young ladies to come up and look at his etchings, except that he's married. We are not such aesthetes, but we do like objects that remind us where we have been. The wooden floors, scuffed from use and warped from leaks, are covered with the rugs. The most memorable salesman was a gloomy Indian who flipped through his wares almost tragically: "I show you my heart. You go to villages now, is finished—finished! I show you my heart." The best (from the seller's point of view) was a Moroccan who ran into us in the souk the day after we had made a purchase. The warmth of his greeting told us how badly we had been taken. Rugs creep up the walls, and even onto the ceiling. But walls and flat surfaces are mostly for objects. Certain themes and body parts repeat. The corner of masks has a jaguar, a demon, a bat, and a Bedouin woman's veil (would we display a shackle?). The shelf of hands has a Buddha's hand, a saint's hand, a cement hand from a tomb, glove molds, and a mold of the hand of a preemie, made by the pediatrician who saved its brand-new life.

More numerous and more troublesome are the things, the odds and ends, the rubble of knick-knacks and dust catchers. Item: a small plastic desk refrigerator. Everything in it is useful; the eggs on the inside door are erasers, the vegetables in the vegetable bin are tiny pens. Item: a green wooden canoe, 20 inches long, with two oars. Item: a snow globe showing the faces of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. Shake it, and there is heavy weather. Item: an ivory opium container, half an inch deep, one and a half inches across, with ivory twist cap (empty). Item: my wife's guitar, a Gibson, snapped in its case. For years she sang me the best tracks on Joan Baez's first album; when I first heard the original, it was with a jolt, the aural equivalent of double vision. Item: a 12 oz. jar filled with old coins. Now we're talking! French ladies, buff Italian demigods, Canadian beavers, British sovereigns. Bearded George V, with all his Latin titles: DEI GRA:BRITT:OMN:REX FID:DEF:IND:IMP: Eat your heart out, Hitler.

There is also, and removing it is one of the points of the exercise, a lot of dirt. The panels of the heater/air conditioners, covered with fur; salamanders of dust behind the sofas; the nameless grit under chair cushions—only the overhaul of a move, or failing that a paint job, will bring it all to light, and banish it to the garbage chute. Out with the dirt go the possessions that have finally overstayed their welcome. The four-inch-long leather quiver from Brattleboro, Vt., filled with arrows, will have to find some tiny brave elsewhere. *The Servile State* by Hilaire Belloc must seek a reader young enough not to reject its bullying nonsense. The COLIN POWELL FOR PRESIDENT 1996 button—any takers? I didn't think so.

Of course it is stressful. One mate (that would be me) undoes and redoes the other's books, but gets them all out of order. Don't try that again, pal. Another mate (that would be her) plugs a lamp cord in behind her unwitting partner, six inches off the floor. Islam's divorce practices seem momentarily attractive. The turmoil also raises the question, how many more times? We last painted 20 years ago; 20 years from now we will be in our seventies and eighties. That will be time for a smaller place, if not Florida; then will come the smallest place. To rearrange is to live. NR



CHARLES NESBIT/GETTY

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Happy Warrior

BY MARK STEYN

Ethiopia Comes to You

THE intersection of the environment and demography continues apace. In the old days, we worried about "overpopulation" in general, which, if only by implication, indicted the fecund mothers of Asia and Africa at least as much as the developed world, if not more. But eco-demography is a more exact science these days. Issuing a stirring call for the British to breed less, and doing it from the exalted perch of the *British Medical Journal*, doctors John Guillebaud and Pip Hayes explain the arithmetic: Every new baby born in the United Kingdom will in his or her lifetime produce 160 times more greenhouse-gas emissions than a baby born in Ethiopia.

We've known for years, of course, that a Brit is worse than . . . well, almost anyone apart from a Yank. But we've known it only in the very general sense that the Brit is the purveyor of imperialism, colonialism, racism, economic exploitation, and other planetary toxins. Now environmentalism enables us to nail down the formula once and for all: An Ethiopian baby is 160 times better for the planet than a British baby. So if you're an Anglo-Celt and you care about the Earth, have fewer kids. Having fewer children is "the simplest and biggest contribution anyone can make to leaving a habitable planet for our grandchildren."

Grandchildren?

Well, we'll come back to that.

Guillebaud and Hayes's gimlet eye on the British maternity ward is matched by Oregon State professors Michael Schlax and Paul Murtaugh's equally withering gaze on the American nursery in a study called "Reproduction and the Carbon Legacies of Individuals." Or as the *Los Angeles Times* headline writer put it: "Tie Your Tubes and Save the Planet?"

Save it for what? And for whom? Presumably for those 160-times-more-environmentally-responsible Ethiopian babies, who'll get to grow up and enjoy it, albeit briefly. (Ethiopian male life expectancy: 44.6 years.)

I was reminded of one of many striking vignettes in Christopher Caldwell's new book, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*. He notes that Italy's "lovely public parks" require a level of manpower the country's shrinking native population can no longer supply. "Without labor from Algeria and Mali," he writes, "those parks will either disappear or be 'automated,' as American parks are (through sprinkers and the replacement of elegant landscaping with grass). In many walks of life, Italy has a choice between keeping the population looking the way it did 50 years ago and keeping the landscape and the social structure looking the way they did 50 years ago." They chose to preserve "the environment."

It works for a while: When there are no Italian gardeners, Algerian gardeners will still lovingly tend their parks in the Italian style even as there are fewer and fewer Italians to stroll in them. But eventually demography tells. A German beer garden is not as beguiling as an Italian park but it has a certain claim on the cultural landscape. According to the Federal Statistics Office, this year German beer sales have fallen to an all-time low. Putting a brave face on the evaporating head of his lager, Peter Hahn, head honcho of the German Brewery Association, attributed the slump to inclement weather. But as he also noted: "We have a changing population. Older people drink less and there are not enough young people to make up for it."

True. Herr Hahn is a victim of demographic temperance. This month, Eurostat released figures showing that Germany has the lowest birth rate in the EU. That would be a non-alcoholic headache for the German Brewery Association in the best of circumstances. But Herr Hahn was too discreet to add that what few young people Germany now has increasingly belong to a demographic not known for its beer intake. A few months back, when the Merkez Mosque opened in the old industrial working-class town of Duisburg boasting splendid minarets and public subsidies totaling more than 3 million euros, Deutsche Welle reported as follows: "New mosque seen as a symbol of integration." Maybe. But it's also a symbol of transformation: There will not be many foaming steins (if you'll forgive the expression) in Duisburg's future.

> The future belongs to those who show up for it.

Perhaps the environmentalists are right, and the best way to preserve the planet for the next generation is not to have a next generation. But somebody will. Germany's Turkish Muslims drink less beer than their Teuton compatriots, but is their carbon footprint otherwise significantly different? I doubt it. The *British Medical Journal*'s rebuke of English motherhood is already unnecessary: Britain has a below-replacement fertility rate; its population increase depends entirely on immigrants and their children. If Scots and Ulstermen and the like are despoiling the planet, you can tie their tubes. But their place in the maternity ward will be taken by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, and even some virtuous Ethiopians: As Europe already knows, no matter how fast you self-extinguish, First World infrastructure does not stay empty. Ethiopia comes to you: Abyssinia in all the old familiar places.

As I usually say around this point, the future belongs to those who show up for it. The Germans, Italians, and Spaniards have upside-down family trees of the type the bien-pensants are commending to the Anglo-Americans. But a people without grandchildren cannot grandfather in their environmental fetishism for all eternity. The health of the planet will be determined by those who stick around—like the Ethiopians. I'm chary about predictions but I'd be willing to bet that by the end of this century the anguished Western liberal environmentalist will be on the endangered species list. **NR**

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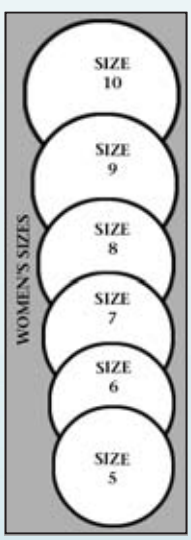

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